

# AUTOMOTIVE EXECUTIVE

MARCH 1986 OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION



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**HOW TO  
SELL VANS**

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**BETTER PROFITS  
THROUGH  
CHEMICALS**

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**THE  
ISLAND DEALER**

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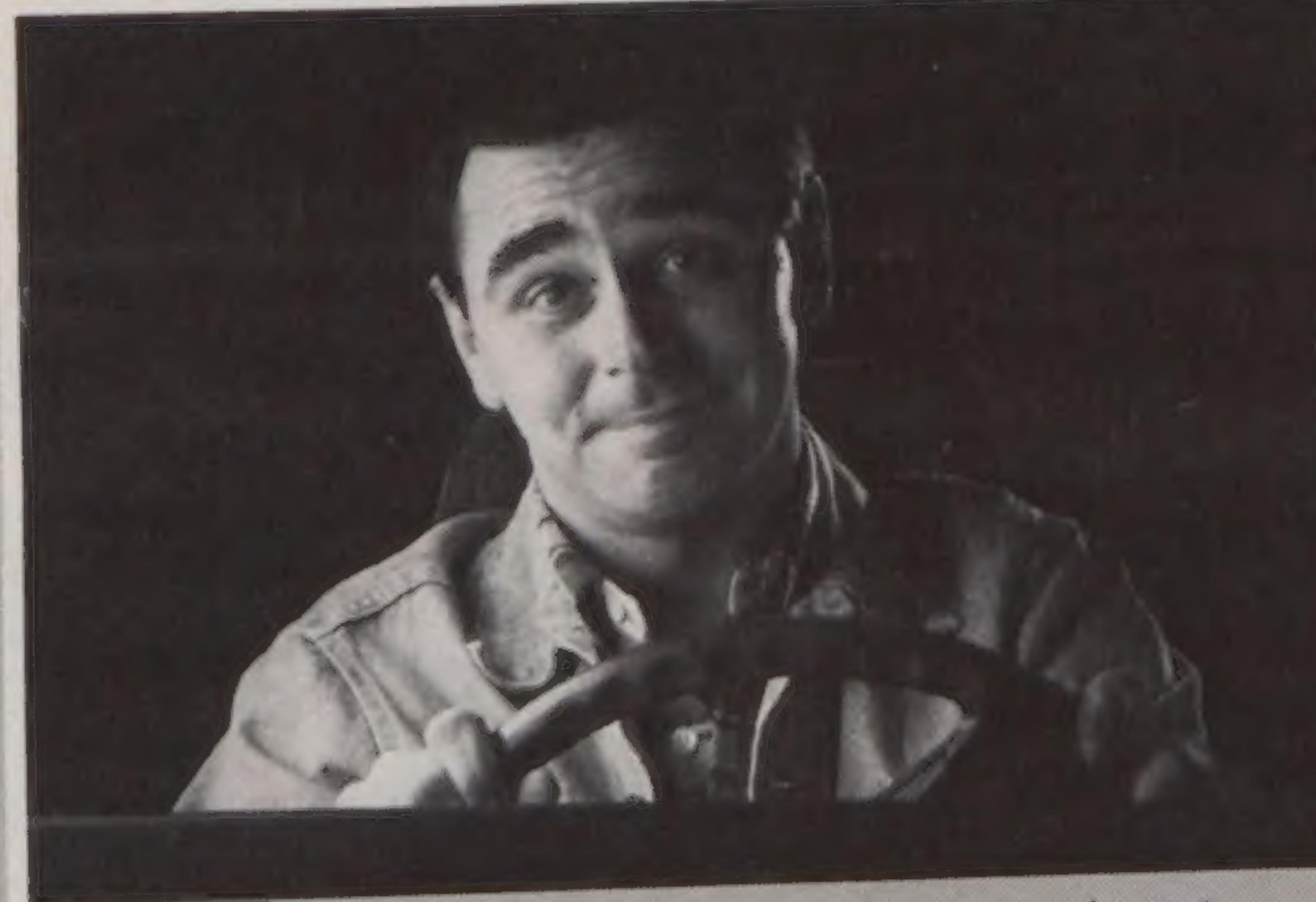
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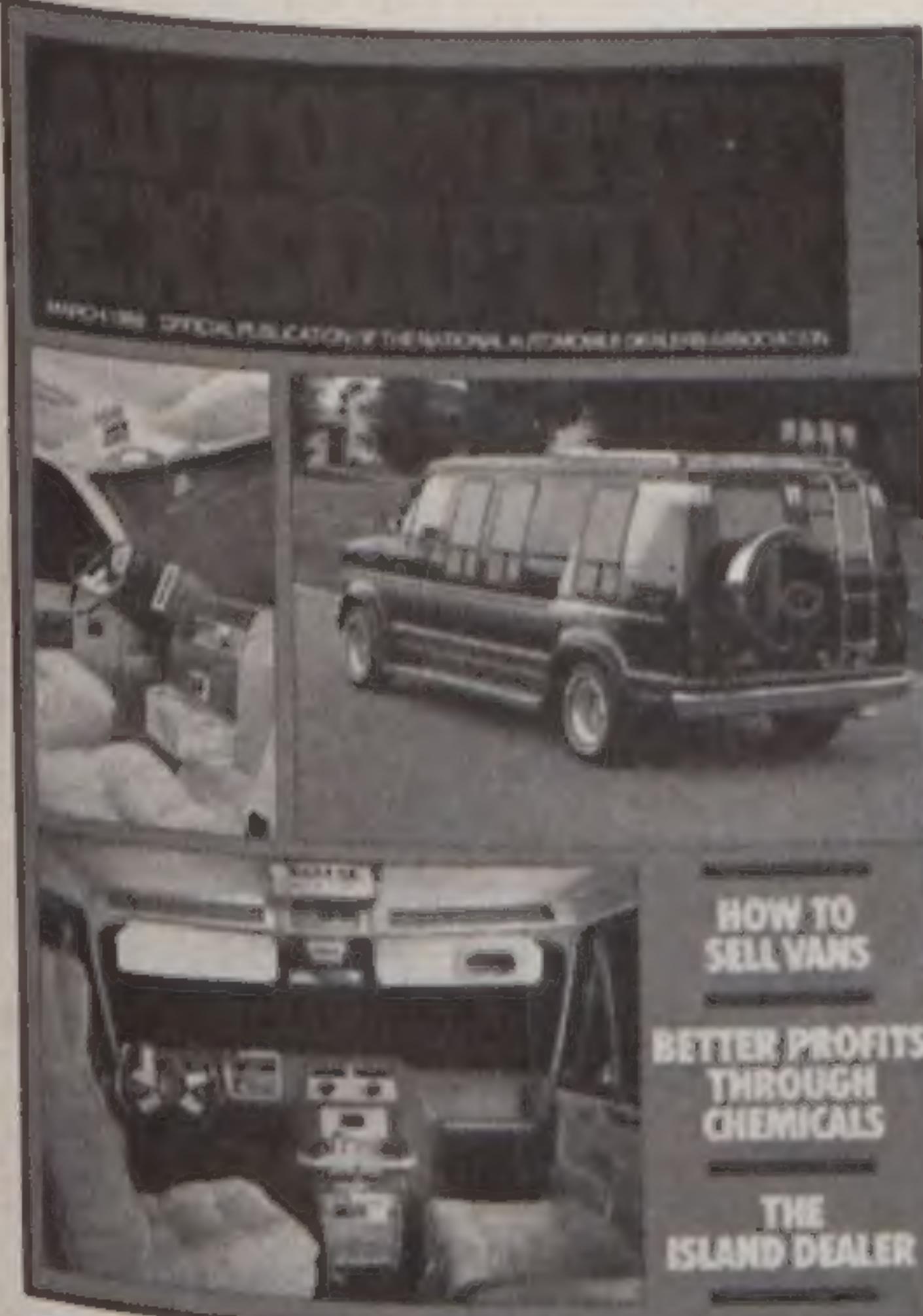
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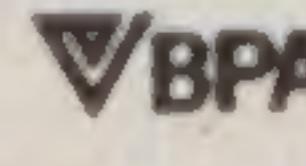
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## FEATURES



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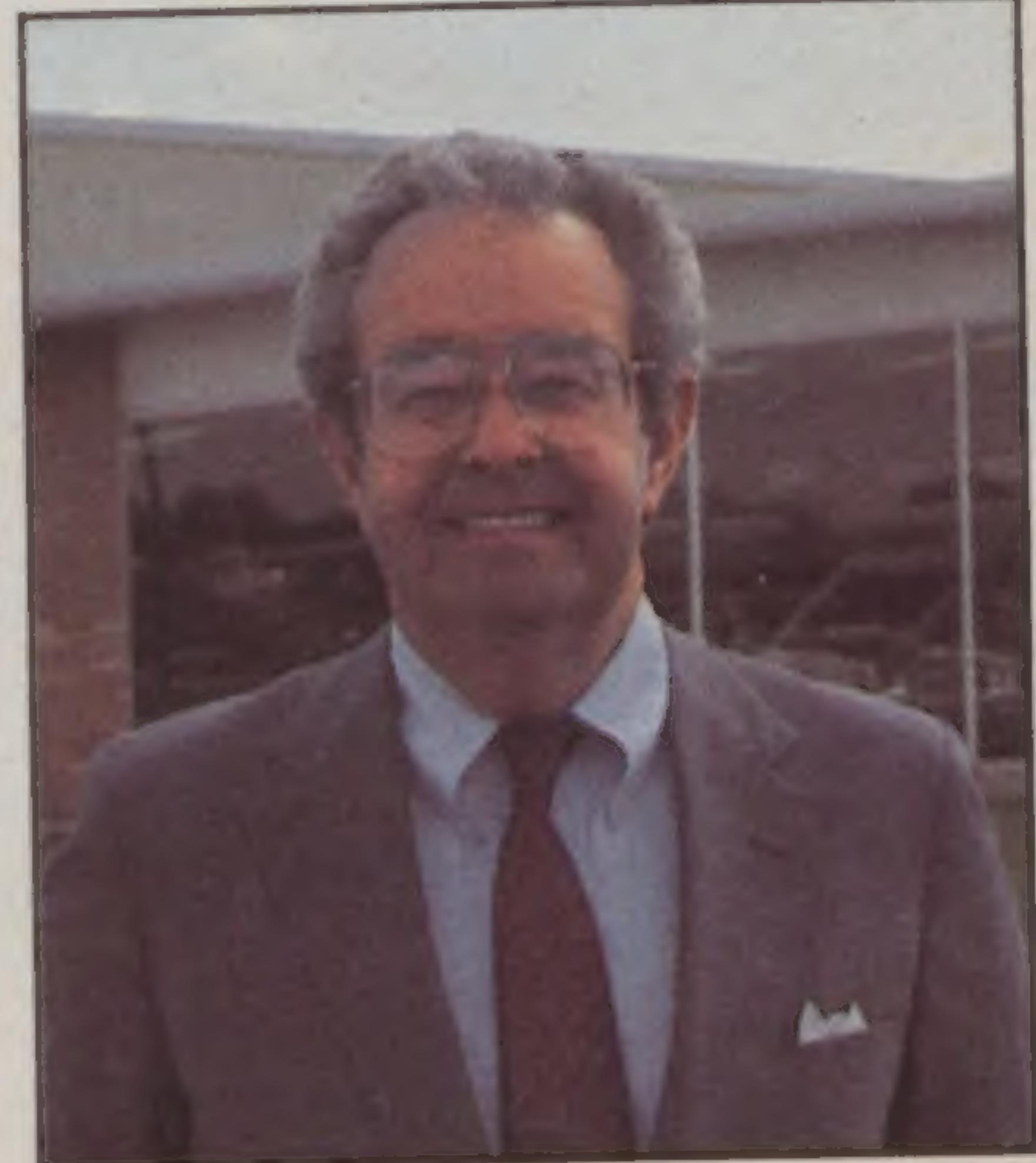
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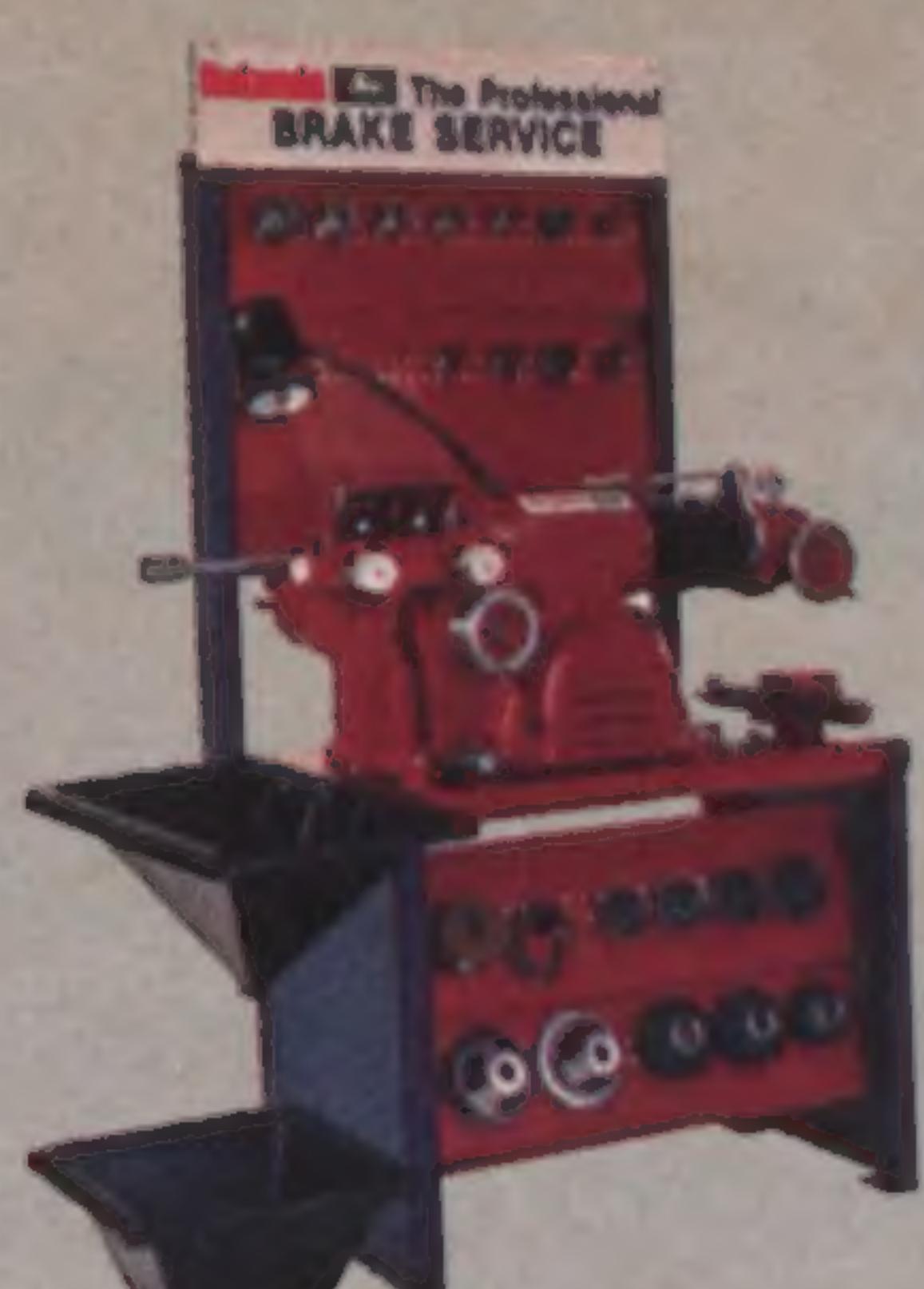
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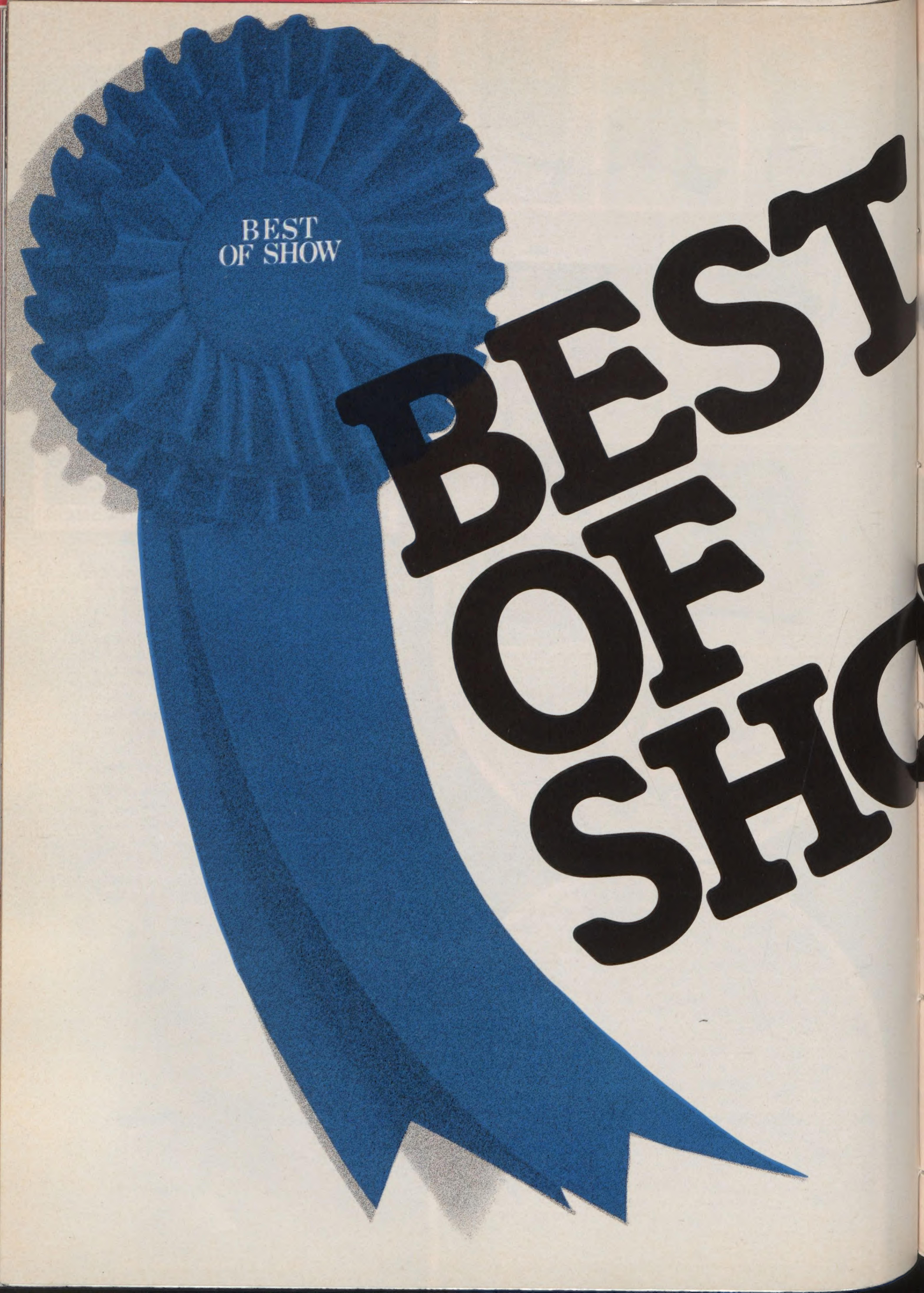
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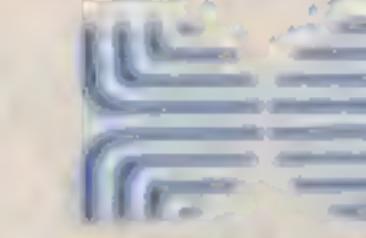
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## Second Chevy Satellite Opens

As dealers around the country look for new ways to market cars, a Wisconsin dealer has opened Chevrolet's second satellite mall store.

"I saw a very strong market in the large regional shopping mall," says John Bergstrom, owner of Strombert Chevrolet-Cadillac, explaining his reasons for opening the store in the Fox River Mall in Appleton. "In this community, six to seven months of the year we have terrible weather, so the mall is where we shop. I thought if I could get people walking to Sears to come in and look at a car, it would be great."

The mall showroom, with 12 to 14 vehicles, supplements Bergstrom's main dealership in Appleton, only five minutes away. All service and repairs are done at the main dealership, but sales and finance and insurance are handled at the mall. The mall store has eight demos for test driving.

Thanks to a computer connected with inventory control and good audio-visual equipment, mall customers don't need to go to the main store to find the car they want. But that linkup is essential.

"It wouldn't work without computers," Bergstrom says flatly.

The most serious problem, he says, is telling the lookers from the buyers. The Christmas shopping crowd brought 800 to 900 people into the store every day. His main dealership only sees 60 people on a good day.

He hopes to sell about 600 cars a year, and is pleased that in the first four weeks the store was open, he sold 26.

Chevrolet's first mall satellite, Mills on the Mall, opened last summer in the Southpark Mall in Moline, IL. Chevrolet spokesman Ed Lechtzin says the question of whether it will add more mall satellites depends on the individual situation: the location, and the size and sales of the main dealership.

### Postal Service Begins Safety Belt Incentive

The U.S. Postal Service, in an effort to increase awareness of the importance of wearing safety belts, has announced it will pay \$10,000 to the estate of any employee who is wearing a safety belt while on pay-duty status and dies in a job-related traffic accident.

An average of 12 postal drivers are killed a year, and 1,500 are seriously injured. Postal records show that probably half of the deaths and 65 percent of the serious injuries could have been avoided if all postal drivers always wore safety belts.

Postal drivers currently have a safety belt-use rate of nearly 75 percent, according to Deputy Postmaster General Jackie Strange.

proved, more efficient automobile as exemplified in the new lines Ford Taurus and Mercury Sable." Audi was cited for "the development of unique four-wheel drive and anti-lock braking systems on the 4000S Quattro and 5000CS Turbo Quattro models respectively, which provide superb handling and safety under difficult driving conditions."

Hall of Fame Merit Award winners in the domestic category were American Motors Corp. and General Motors Corp. (Cadillac Motor Division). In the import category, they were Mercedes-Benz of North America Inc., Toyota Motor Sales Inc. and Volkswagen of America Inc.

### No Down Payment

Empire of America Federal Savings Bank, based in Buffalo, NY, is offering 100-percent financing of new-car loans, including tax, plus a \$200 rustproofing allowance. Customers may stretch payments over 48 months, with an 11.95-percent interest rate. There is no ceiling on the loans. Empire has branches in New York and Michigan.

### Ford, Audi Honored

Ford Motor Co. and Audi (division of Volkswagen of America) won the second annual *Consumers Digest* Hall of Fame awards in the domestic and import automobile categories.

Both companies were selected by a national survey for their responsiveness to consumer needs. Ford was cited for "the 'team' approach to design and engineer an im-

### Theft-Proof Radios

The new radios in top-of-the-line 1986 Saabs not only have touchplate controls that are activated electronically, but also anti-theft circuitry that ensures the sound system will play only for the owner. If the radio is removed from the dashboard or is disconnected, it is disabled until the owner types in a secret code.

**NADA President James Woulfe (left) and Immediate Past President William Symes (right) confer with Vice President George Bush at last month's NADA Convention.**



### "New Values" Buyers

A study by a consulting firm paints a picture of the "new values" auto buyer, the baby boom consumers between age 25 and 40. Today's car buyers are younger, better educated and increasingly female, according to research by Temple, Barker & Sloane in Lexington, MA.

The new breed of buyers "believes it is economically sensible to log a lot of miles on their vehicles before trading them and are much more deliberate in their buying habits," the study states. They value reliability and durability more than appearance.

These new buyers are important to dealers because their financial positions are less likely to be influenced by the overall economy than those of traditional buyers, so they can help pull dealers through bad times.

The author of the study, John Schnapp, believes dealer showrooms will have to change to accommodate "new values" buyers. "Typical showroom selling tactics, which often come across as patronizing to female consumers, serve to alienate younger, well-educated, 'new values' buyers," he says.

### Highway Book Out

The 1986 Highway Fact Book, issued by the Highway Users Federation and Automotive Safety Foundation, contains information on everything from per capita gasoline use by state, to gasohol, to safety belt use to alcohol and traffic accidents.

The pocket-size reference work includes highway transportation and traffic safety facts in 23 categories. It lists the 16 states that, with the District of Columbia, have passed safety belt use laws, and reveals that commuting by public transit has decreased from 10 percent in 1970 to 7 percent in 1980.

The booklet can be ordered from the Highway Users Federation, 1776 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20036, (202) 857-1251, for 50 cents a copy; quantity prices on request.

### British Belt-Use Study

In Great Britain, where a belt-use law has achieved use rates of 90 to 95 percent, the number of people treated for vehicle crash injuries in emergency rooms has dropped 15 percent, and the number admitted later has dropped 25 percent, according to a study commissioned by the British Department of Health and Social Security.

Data on more than 14,000 crash patients were obtained from 15 hospitals in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales during the year preceding implementation of the law on Feb. 1, 1983 and during the following year. The figures showed that front seat passengers gained about twice the benefits from wearing safety belts as drivers.

For those receiving only emergency room care, the number of drivers treated fell 10 percent in the year after the law went into effect, compared with a 22-percent drop for front seat passengers. And 23 percent fewer drivers and

43 percent fewer front seat passengers needed hospitalization.

The total number of patients was lowered by 14.6 percent, from 7,273 to 6,213, and the average number of days spent in the hospital following admission dropped 27 percent for drivers and 35 percent for front seat passengers.

### Technicians Go for Exams

Technicians are signing up for Mechanic Certification Exams in record numbers, according to the National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). Registrations for the exam were up for the sixth consecutive testing period, with more than 31,000 taking the November 1985 test, bringing the total for last year to nearly 88,000. The exams are given in November and May in over 300 locations nationwide.

In addition, two surveys conducted as part of the Institute's consumer awareness

program showed that the majority of consumers believe they get better service from certified mechanics. The survey was done in two pilot cities, Charlotte, NC and Columbus, OH. In Charlotte, 72 percent of the respondents said they preferred dealing with certified mechanics and in Columbus, 64 percent did.

### Red is Favorite Car Color

Red-brown was the most popular OEM finish in the 1984 model year, according to an annual survey of leading car colors by the DuPont Co. Nearly 20 percent of leading 1984 domestic models were sold in various shades of red. Second most popular was white (12.6 percent), followed by dark blue (12.4 percent), light blue (9 percent) and silver (7.8 percent).

*Please send news items for "Executive Notes" to Joan Mooney, Automotive Executive, 8400 Westpark Drive, McLean, VA 22102.*



Built to mark the 100th anniversary of the granting of the patent for the first automobile on Jan. 29, 1886, nine exact replicas of Karl Benz's three-wheeled vehicle were lined up in the Daimler-Benz museum workshop near Stuttgart, West Germany, before being shipped to museums around the world. They were assembled by Mercedes apprentices using only the materials available to Benz a century ago.



## Hawaii Belt Education

**H**awaii passed its safety belt law with little opposition, but just to make sure, the Hawaii Automobile Dealers Association (HADA) started the Hawaii Coalition for Safety Belt Use to educate drivers after the law was passed. HADA Executive Director Hardy Hutchinson is pleased with the results so far.

The law passed last spring with only 11 opposing votes in the 75-member legislature. Already, belt use has increased considerably. Estimated voluntary use stood at 20 percent last August, after the law was passed but before it went into effect. A newspaper survey concluded that belt use had climbed to 38 percent by November. The law took effect Dec. 16, and a month

later, Hutchinson estimated that compliance was at least 60 percent.

He attributes that rise in large part to extensive participation by coalition members, which include state government agencies such as the Departments of Education and Transportation, several local police departments, the University of Hawaii School of Public Health, the American Automobile Association, the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, and medical groups and hospitals. Hutchinson says the effort was aided by the fact that Hawaii's governor, George R. Ariyoshi, is honorary chairman of the coalition.

Publicity has been a large part of the coalition's work, with one important limitation. "Hawaii has a

very restrictive outdoor sign law," Hutchinson says. "We can't have any billboards." But the group has found other ways to spread the word. Car rental companies, for example, have been cooperative because of the state's heavy tourism. They are posting "Fasten Seat Belt" signs in cars and on counters.

Aloha Airlines has provided the state with 50,000 stickers sporting that slogan, and is distributing another 50,000 on its own. Supermarket shopping bags carry the message. Utilities put reminders in their customer bills, and banks and corporations place them in their payroll envelopes. Hawaii Electric has a safety program for employees that includes information about safety belts.

### Tough 'n Slippery



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# HOW TO SELL VANS TIPS FROM SUCCESSFUL DEALERS

By Ted Orme

**G**etting into the conversion van business can be like a blind date, with expectations far exceeding reality. But sometimes, the date becomes a mate and the pair lives happily ever after. It happens all the time.

So why is one dealer's dog another dealer's dream come true? A lot of it has to do with common sense.

Everybody knows the conversion van business has more ups and downs than a Coney Island roller coaster. But in good times, like the past two years, everything seems to sell. It's hard to watch smiling customers drive away in high-gross vans from Joyful Motors across the street, so you take a chance on a few yourself.

But unless you know what you're doing, your "King Tut" vans could sit on the lot gathering dust and red ink like moss on a shaded stone. Worse, they sell, fall apart and owners curse you to everyone in earshot, costing countless future car sales. The same weekend you run your "Conversion Van Liquidation" ad, Joyful Motors announces a big promotion to celebrate "Our Best Year Ever." The whole enterprise

has been an exercise in self-flagellation.

However, before you pay too much attention to those who compare their conversion van experiences with dreaded diseases or natural disasters, listen to six dealers who have made conversion van sales a highly-profitable, long-term business operation.

#### Southgate Ford, Detroit, MI

"You can't dabble in vans," says Truck Sales Manager Tom Morris, who keeps about 30 conversion vans in inventory. "They are too expensive and you can get burned quickly. The key is to stay on top of conversion vans like you'd stay on top of an 11-year-old child with a bad attitude."

By that, Morris means you have to "be committed to the business, know your market—prices, colors, engines and options—and order your packages to suit customers." He attributes Southgate's success to a wide selection of vans from more than one converter; to dealing only with reputable, reliable converters whose parent companies manufacture motorhomes as well as conversion vans and who belong to factory bailment pools; and to never selling "bootleg" vans with-

out an RVIA safety sticker (see accompanying box) and proven warranty and service backup.

Southgate sells about 70 Aviator/Utilimaster, Rockwell and Van America conversions a year, with packages ranging from \$3,000 to \$6,000. Morris says all the companies offer excellent warranty services and training for dealer personnel.

"We get cross-shopped a lot, so it's important to demonstrate the quality of our products—the insulation, the sub-flooring, the fireproof carpeting and automotive fabric, the RVIA sticker on the back and what that means," Morris says. "A lot of customers think they can get a van converted for \$2,000 until we show them what quality and safety are all about."

Southgate wants all its salespeople to sell both cars and trucks but Morris admits, that with the sharp jump in truck and conversion lines and variations, "it's tough to digest all that information." His job as truck manager is to "stay on top of them and help close the sale."

Having a reputation as a strong truck dealership—Southgate sold over 800 trucks in 1985 out of a total new-vehicle volume of 1,400—is also a big plus, Morris says. "If

Coachman



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Tech-Trans



you're recognized as a truck store, then customers accept you as a conversion van store. They know you have the support services to handle their needs."

Southgate advertises conversion vans heavily and keeps them prominently displayed in the showroom and across the dealership's front row. "But don't let them sit there," Morris says. "Move them around, so people think it's fresh iron."

#### Sharp Ford, Indianapolis, IN

Like Tom Morris, dealer Mike Shore emphasizes the importance of dealing with a good converter. But after trying others, he now deals only with one—Bivouac. He points out that Bivouac carries low, medium and high-priced conversions, and he finds it to his advantage to be the exclusive dealer for the area. "It simplifies things and that keeps the warranty clerk and service people happy," he says.

Sharp is also a strong truck dealership, with nearly half of its 2,300 new-vehicle sales in 1985 coming from trucks. The dealership sold 250 conversion vans last year and Shore expects to do even better in 1986. "There is much competition in this area and a lot of shopping by consumers, but we can sell

them when they see the difference in quality between our vans and the schlock versions some other dealers carry," he says.

Shore relies on his sales force to point out that difference, and he relies on Bivouac to educate his salespeople. "Bivouac holds regular sales meetings and factory tours and their brochures are excellent," he says. "They realize that the more the salesman knows, the easier it is to combat the junk vans down the street."

Shore displays his vans in his showroom and across the front row of the dealership, but he does not advertise a great deal. He does some promotions and tie-ins with Bivouac, and he gets a lot of mileage out of supplying vans for the Indianapolis Colts winter basketball team. Colt players also come to autograph sessions and a few have bought conversions from Sharp.

#### Bellman GMC, Van & Truck Center, Florissant, MO

One of GM's largest light truck dealers, Bellman sold 1,200 full-sized van conversions and 380 minivan conversions in 1985. On any given visit to Bellman GMC, located about 10 miles outside of St. Louis, van conversion shoppers can choose from about 200 full-sized and 100 minis on the lot, and one of eight salespeople specializing in van sales answers their every question.

The principal line offered is Starcraft, but Bellman handles eight different conversions, ranging from a \$14,000 base package by Starcraft to a "super upscale," \$29,000 unit by Carriage Vans. Bellman also carries a lot of mini-van conversions, which dealer Ken Bellman says "complement the full-size vans" and is "a market that is here to stay. Just look at the sales projections."

All of Bellman's conversions carry the RVIA sticker. "We won't

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# Changing The Way America Travels!

1986 BIVOUAC AUTOMOTIVE CORPORATION

## RVIA's Van Safety Program

By William Garpow

**D**ealers who sell van conversions must be certain that the conversions they sell meet the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) promulgated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Dealers who ignore this responsibility violate federal law and may find themselves at great financial risk should a new owner be injured by the lack of a properly installed safety belt or other oversight. Penalties can be very severe, since the dealership is as responsible for selling van conversions that meet safety standards as the converter is for manufacturing them.

A few of the federal requirements are easy for dealers to watch for in completed vans. For instance, does the van have a three-point safety belt installed for both front seats, and is there a lap belt for all other seating locations? Another item easily verified is the placement of a federal certification label on the driver's door edge of the B pillar. This label identifies the converter by name and discloses whether it serves as an "alterer" or a "final stage manufacturer."

Most of the federal standards, however, do not lend themselves to a visual inspection by an untrained eye. In fact, many of the FMVSS requirements can only be determined by physical testing, often involving the destruction of the vehicle. Burn tests, crash tests and pull testing for strength or endurance are typical methods used.

To assist the van converter and dealers in conforming with the law, the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) has developed an extensive safety program, now in full swing. The



program makes use of publications, educational seminars and physical and procedural inspections, combined with an enforcement system to accomplish safety goals.

Participants in RVIA's safety program are subject to unannounced periodic inspections from trained RVIA inspectors. During the visit, the inspector studies the manufacturers' files to determine that a system is in place to meet federal standards, and he also inspects vans on the production line for compliance with electrical standards.

If there is any problem, the company is notified to correct it. If, after a stated deadline, the problem still exists, the van converter faces expulsion from the association, including loss of its right to display the black and silver RVIA van safety seal on conversions. This seal alerts dealers and buyers to the manufacturer's safety commitment.

"This program works because it contributes to safety," says Don Cuzzocrea, president of Starcraft Co., and chairman of RVIA's Custom Van Conversion Committee. "Consumers look for the RVIA van seal because they're concerned with their family's welfare; dealers look for the seal because they know their liabilities, and van converters are anxious to join the program to demonstrate their commitment to safety," Cuzzocrea says.

The industry has rallied behind the program since its launch in January 1984, and nearly 175 van converters nationwide now participate.

For more information, contact RVIA, P.O. Box 2999, Reston, VA 22090, (703) 620-6003. ■

*William R. Garpow is RVIA's vice president of communications.*

of the country's most populated areas, Queen City has the kind of exposure most dealers dream about. And that is, no doubt, one of the reasons it is the largest volume truck dealer in New Jersey. But, as Truck Sales Manager Bob Durgett points out, "we have tremendous competition, including one mega-dealer right down the road, so we have to know what we are doing."

What sets Queen City off from the competition, and helps sell 200 to 225 conversion vans a year, "is quality products," Durgett says. "We only deal with converters who are in bailment pools and who back up their products," says Durgett. "It pays to represent a strong product to begin with because there is less trouble selling it and servicing the customer after the sale. It makes everybody happy. Every year sales go up as we take trades from former customers and their friends. And, because they are high-quality conversions, they don't stay long."

Queen City sells Gerring, Comfort Coach and Utilimaster, at prices ranging from \$12,500 to \$25,000. The sales force is split between cars and trucks/vans, and keen attention is paid to product knowledge."

After two strong sales years for conversion vans, Durgett thinks the next six months will tell the story on the long-term strength of the market. Like most dealers, he believes the market is temporarily saturated. But he is confident about the future, and has even initiated a new leasing program that he says is "going very well."

"The biggest thing is to have the exposure, sell quality vehicles, and be willing to gamble and stock," Durgett concludes. "If you don't, then don't go into the business." ■

*Ted Orme is contributing features writer of Automotive Executive.*

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Are  
Two Words  
That Can  
Raise  
Your C.S.I.

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
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Enclosed with this quality gift are two custom printed French Linen cards; a thank-you card, imprinted with your logo, and a response/referral card, stamped and addressed back to your dealership. This response card asks your customer for comments, feedback and, most importantly, referrals of friends and business associates.

Four months after the sale (just prior to the manufacturer's C.S.I. report) we send your customer another response/referral card. This card, also stamped and addressed back to you, asks your customer for comments and suggestions about your service department, as well as additional referrals.



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We appreciate your confidence in us. To enable us to continue providing the quality service you desire, would you kindly take a moment to complete and mail this card? Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

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CITY

STATE

PHONE

DATE

Thank you again for purchasing your automobile from us

• Have you been treated courteously by everyone?

Yes No

Thank You

We hope everything has been to your satisfaction. It is our desire to continue to provide the finest in quality and service to you.

Please do not hesitate to call upon us if you be of further assistance.

VALLEY MOTORS



TOYOTA

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on



## Here's what automotive dealers say about The Gift Connection...

*"Since signing with The Gift Connection, we have received a steady flow of positive responses, along with a high percentage of referrals. And our sales staff is doing a better job at follow-ups, due to the positive responses they receive."*

David Dow, Holiday Buick Oldsmobile  
Lancaster, CA

*"Thanks to The Gift Connection our C.S.I. sales points have gone from 70 to 90. It's the best program we've ever used."*

Carl Ditzel, Lion Chevrolet  
Baldwin, NY

*"The Gift Connection has increased our C.S.I. Report Points by 20% to 25%...your program offers us the opportunity to make a "friend" rather than just a customer, which opens the door for referrals."*

Jim Kvasager, Modern Chrysler, AMC, Jeep  
Grand Forks, ND

*"I've been in the automotive business all my life and The Gift Connection is the best investment I've ever made... Your program works!"*

Michael J. Berrang, Mike Berrang Pontiac  
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By Ted Orme

Like many small cities across America, Columbia, Tennessee has clean streets, good schools and a stable economy. There is both light and heavy industry (a Monsanto plant, two chemical companies, a few shirt factories, and a bustling retail trade) and a strong agricultural base (it is the second largest cattle raising county in Tennessee) to keep its 50,000 residents employed and seemingly well adjusted. In short, it's a nice place to live. The boom and bust cycles that reaped havoc on so many cities this size during the last decade missed Columbia.

But that's all about to change.

Columbia, you see, is right next door to Spring Hill, future site of General Motor's \$5-billion Saturn plant. By now you have read endless accounts of how the future of GM—some say the future of the U.S. automobile industry—rests on this largest single industrial investment in the history of the nation. And you have read that Spring Hill, a tiny crossroads town of 5,000 people, two traffic lights, two policemen, one bank and one church, has taken on a gold rush atmosphere as speculators descend on this innocent burg. Land and real estate values have exploded in anticipation of the day one-half million cars a year are being built on the white fenced pastures of the gracious Haynes Haven farm. We will not rehash this much reported event. Suffice it to say, Spring Hill—and its neighbors—will never be the same.

That's why Harold Lucas smiles a lot these days.

With an annual volume of about 600 new vehicles, Lucas Cadillac and Chevrolet is the largest among six auto dealers in Columbia—just about right for the current population. But conservative estimates of

# Why Is Harold Lucas Smiling?



**You would, too, if your new neighbor turned out to be GM's new Saturn project.**

Columbia's growth over the next five or six years are put at 30,000, and that is "heady news for a city this size," says Lucas. There are concerns, of course, about the effect of this high-speed development on the quality of life, but Lucas says citizens, businesses and politicians are primed for the challenge.

"Obviously, it's going to bring some problems to governments, the school systems and so on," says Lucas in a soft, cultured Tennessee drawl. "But I talked with a friend of mine in Oklahoma City who said there was similar concern when GM announced plans to built a plant in there. But he said it is now 'the finest little city around' because of the money GM invests. I don't see why it should be any different in Spring Hill. GM has indicated they plan to be a good neighbor. They don't want to destroy what's here.

"Other than a tremendous amount of traffic and a big jump in population, I don't think anyone perceives what it will do," he adds. "I'm sure it will have some negative impact, but there are some people that would be unhappy with an ice cream cone in both hands and more on the way. Generally speaking, it's got to be economically good for Tennessee and particularly Middle Tennessee.

"I think the state recognizes that the town can't do it on its own," Lucas says. "We expect a lot of help. And I would think that these workers will live in a 30- or 40-mile radius of the Saturn plant, which takes in a lot of territory. In fact, one of the GM executives said they found that even in Michigan many workers commuted 50 and 60 miles to work because they like to have a little plot of ground and a nice little house with 10 acres where they can raise some chickens. If they like that, they have come to paradise here. So I expect a lot of rural areas to benefit from Saturn."



Lucas admits that the initial news of Saturn's coming was met by some "crazy land speculation," but he says now "we don't find much hysteria. People here have already learned that you don't give somebody a contract without a substantial chunk of earnest money and a fair closing date. Initially, a lot of people came in and put \$1,000 down on \$1-million deal and a six-month closing. They intended to buy, resell and make a killing. But I think most of that's over with already."

Lucas bought his store 20 years ago after serving for many years as general manager for a Chrysler/Plymouth dealer in Nashville. He started out with three employees, but three years later built a new facility which considerably expanded his operations and goals. Today, Lucas sells about 600 new and 200 used vehicles from an attractive, six-acre facility in Columbia. Employment has risen to 35.

As far as the future is concerned, Lucas says, "We already had long-range plans on what we were going to do to grow, and this perhaps will speed them up a bit. We have planned for several years to build a separate body shop on this lot next door. We may do that sooner."

Of course, Lucas is looking forward to picking up his share of new business, particularly "courtesy deliveries" to many of GM's 6,000 Saturn employees. Ironically, he will need all these new sales if he hopes to pick up a Saturn franchise himself.

"You know Saturn was originally promised to Chevrolet dealers back in the crunch," Lucas points out. "GM said 'hey, we have this new car coming that's going to lead you out of the wilderness.' Then, with their clean slate approach, they apparently determined it needed to be a separate corporation, with separate facilities, separate wholesale organization and separate dealer

**"We already had long-range plans on what we were going to do to grow, and this perhaps will speed them up a bit."**

network. My impression is that GM has now said it will go to the leading GM dealer in a market, or, if no GM dealer is qualified, then to others. But I think they intend to give GM dealers first shot. I suspect most GM dealers around the country have applied for Saturn.

"With only about 500,000 Saturn cars a year, however, you are only talking about 700 or 800 dealers, maybe not that many," he continued. "So Saturn will probably go to the metropolitan areas, the smallest I imagine being 100,000. They will have to decide if this market is big enough for one. But this market is not necessarily small because most of GM's 6,000 employees are going to buy a car here. Even if you don't make much off it, that's a lot of money—enough to support a separate facility.

Lucas notes that volume will be important to any Saturn franchise because of the start-up costs of facilities, equipment, manpower and computers. If I had to start from scratch today and build this facility,

I'm not sure it could be profitable. It would tie-up several million dollars, and I don't see how you can make a return on that selling less than 1,000 units a year."

The main criteria for getting a Saturn franchise will be the primary keys of any dealership—"capital, facilities, manpower and management," Lucas says. "And I would think the applicant who demonstrates those qualities best would be the successful franchisee. We think we can do that.

"Another big thing with Saturn is going to be your customer satisfaction index," he points out. "It's got to be good. Ours is good. We are a Chevrolet Service Supremacy dealer. We work very hard to see that our customers are happy."

Lucas chuckles as he recalls various articles on the demise of the franchise. "I think the thing they leave out is the fact that manufacturers are not going to be able to build perfect cars. They are still going to have to deal with customers, and I don't think the factory can deal with customers on a one-to-one basis. The only way to do that is to have some sort of a dealer network—individual businesspeople who live in the community and face these customers daily. That way, you have to make them happy. There is really no choice if you want to stay and be successful."

"But it costs money to make people happy," adds Lucas, citing the expense of keeping salesmen and technicians trained and equipped. "It takes dedication and money."

Lucas agrees it would hurt not to get a Saturn franchise, but he points out "nothing is set in stone, not even the car." He also agrees that, one way or the other, "Saturn will change my life."

*Ted Orme is contributing features writer of Automotive Executive.*

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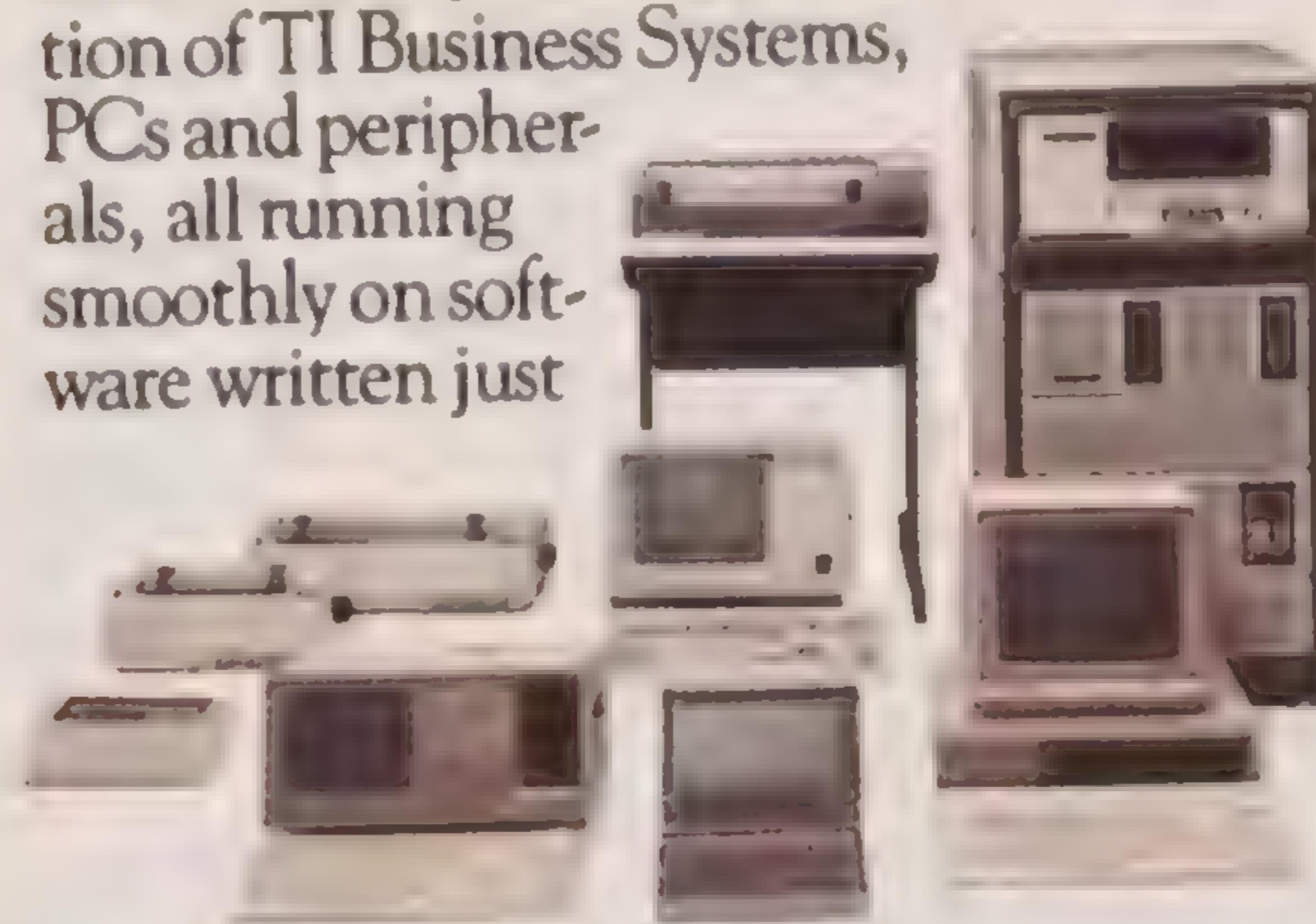
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And Don Horning of Horning Dodge in New Holland, PA, is amazed at the sys-

tem's reliability. "It's been in constant use for over a full year, and we've yet to have a failure. The equipment is rugged — it works flawlessly."

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# Trucking to

By Joan Mooney

**W**hat better site for the ATD Convention than Anaheim, CA, site of America's favorite fantasy land, where dreams come true? A vital event for truck dealers, the ATD Convention offers four days of speakers, workshops, make meetings, the chance to make contacts in all parts of the industry and a suppliers' exposition that will be bigger than ever. In addition, manufacturers and suppliers will sponsor their own events each evening.

While you're there, be sure to explore the beauties of Southern California. Anaheim, 27 miles from downtown Los Angeles, was a farming community when young Walt Disney opened the doors of his Magic Kingdom 31 years ago; today, it is the largest city in Orange County and one of the fastest growing cities in the region. Whether you're interested in shopping, whale watching or theme parks, Orange County has something to offer.

The Convention's opening ses-

sion starts at 1:15 p.m. Saturday, April 12 with a speech by Charles Pigott, president and chief operating officer of PACCAR Inc. Other highlights are:

- *Non-denominational worship service*, 9:30 a.m. Sunday, April 13. Delegates will be bussed to the Crystal Cathedral, a \$16-million glass cathedral designed by architect Phillip Johnson featuring 10,000 panes of glass. Robert Schuller will preside.

- *Delegates luncheon*, noon Sunday, April 13. Speaker to be announced.

- *Delegates luncheon*, noon Monday, April 14. Speaker: Dr. Barry Asmus, professor of economics.

- *Delegates luncheon*, noon Tuesday, April 15. Speaker: Tom Sullivan, "Good Morning America" reporter, singer, composer, actor, author, humanitarian.

In addition, 10 workshops have been tentatively scheduled:

- *Contract maintenance management*. Learn about the advantages of contract maintenance, developing your market and putting

the program into action.

- *Creative compensation planning*. Simulation exercises to help dealers plan compensation programs for management, salespeople, service personnel and parts counter people.

- *The tightening insurance market*. The speaker will examine the changes in the insurance market affecting dealers and will help you evaluate your property and liability coverage. Learn how to determine when insurance is necessary and how to bargain with agents and brokers.

- *Successorship planning*. Two speakers from the NADA Dealer Candidate Academy will discuss advance planning for the transfer of dealer ownership.

- *Federal tax update*. A discussion of the effect of recent changes in tax legislation on dealers, including a brief examination of the federal excise tax.

- *Employee satisfaction*. Ways a truck dealer can keep his employees motivated, such as innovative compensation plans and counseling.

- *Employee management*. Estab-

Toyota Grand Prix



Crystal Cathedral



# California

lishing a personnel program in your dealership that will help you hire and fire people.

■ **Parts inventory management.** Managing and controlling parts inventory for maximum profit and efficiency.

■ **Communication made easier.** A confident communication style is helpful to any dealer, whether for selling, managing or disciplining.

■ **Effective labor relations.** Two major questions will be dealt with: Why does union activity start up? and, What can a dealer do to diminish the threat of unions?

In addition to the keynote speakers, workshops and make meetings, the ATD Equipment Exposition provides a prime opportunity to see the latest in industry products, services and technology. Dealers can casually browse and shop the tools, repair equipment, computers and other displays.

## Fun in the Sun

But don't become so absorbed in the convention activity center that you miss the attractions outside. Disneyland is just across the street and

another major theme park, Knott's Berry Farm, is nearby. Four themed areas are featured at this 150-acre park: Ghost Town, Fiesta Village, the Roaring '20s Airfield and Camp Snoopy. Six Flags Movie-land Wax Museum has over 230 lifelike figures of famous movie stars in realistic costumes and scenes from classic movies.

Two of the area's big events take place the week of the ATD Convention. The California Angels open the baseball season against the Seattle Mariners at Anaheim Stadium April 14. For tickets, call (714) 634-2000. The Toyota Grand Prix in Long Beach will be held April 11-13, just a few miles from Anaheim. The \$11.5-million CART Indy Car World Series will be the main attraction. Nearly 200,000 people descend on Long Beach for this yearly event, which combines the best of the sports and entertainment worlds. For information, call (213) 436-9953.

And there's no better place than Southern California just to relax and soak up some sun. You're never far from the beach, the temperature

**ATD prepares to launch TRX-'86, the annual truck dealers' convention**

hovers around a pleasant 70 degrees F in April, and the warm weather lets you play your favorite outdoor sport all year round. When the sun goes down, you can go to one of the many nearby restaurants and cocktail lounges. Orange County is also home to many theaters, dinner theaters and night clubs.

The ATD Convention spouses program includes a daylong Port Adventure tour, with a visit to the Spruce Goose and the Queen Mary. The Spruce Goose, Howard Hughes' plane, has been under cover since 1947, but now this plane, the largest ever built, is open to the public. The majestic Queen Mary is the world's largest passenger ocean liner afloat. A trip to the arts and crafts colony of Laguna Beach will also be offered, with art galleries, shops and boutiques all within walking distance.

Don't miss ATD '86. Between the chance to make industry contacts and the California sun, you'll be glad you came. ■

*Joan Mooney is associate editor of Automotive Executive.*

**Disneyland (open 9 a.m. to midnight Saturday; 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday; and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Wednesday)**



# Better Profits Through CHEMICALS

By Gerry Donohue

**A**dditional profits, improved customer relations and increased repeat sales. That's what companies in the chemical and protectants aftermarket can provide dealers today. And dealers are responding. These companies are prospering as more and more dealers capitalize on the profit potential of the aftermarket.

"Business is excellent," says Willard Nisson, president of Siskin Enterprises Inc. in Salt Lake City, UT. "It's been climbing 30 percent each year and this past year it's closer to 40 percent."

Those increases stem from increased customer demand for the products and growing dealer appreciation of the profit potential of the aftermarket.

"The chemical and protectants aftermarket can be one of the most lucrative profit centers for dealers," says Duraguard President Bob Shoenfeld. "The larger import and dual dealers have known this for years, but we're now getting more and more queries from smaller domestic dealers in the Midwest and West."

That increased demand prompted Duraguard Inc., based in New Rochelle, NY, to begin nationwide operations last year. That company now competes with a limited number of nationwide companies in the national chemical and protectants market.

To gain perspective on this market, *Automotive Executive* talked to the officers of five of these nationwide suppliers: Siskin Enterprises, Duraguard, Thermo-Guard, Carecraft Industries and Automotive International (Waxoyl). Each spoke at length about the current state of the market, its future and what they believe dealers should look for in selecting a chemical and protectants company.

## The Aftermarket Today

"Because of the evolving structure of the automobile industry at the dealer level," says Richard Rockwell, administrative assistant of Thermo-Guard Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, FL, "There's probably more money to be made from aftermarket than from the vehicles."

With the influx of imports from Europe, Japan—and soon—Korea and Taiwan, price competition in new vehicle sales is approaching a near frenzy. Dealers may have to consider sources other than just the vehicle sale for profit opportunities, such as the aftermarket.

"Consumers like chemical and protectants packages because they get something for their money—protection and a warranty," says Duraguard's Bob Shoenfeld.

And "getting something for their money" has become much more important to customers as the average car price has crossed \$11,000.

"People are more conscious of the investment they have in their vehicle," says David Besuden, president of Automotive International Inc. in Cincinnati, OH. "They want to protect that investment. That's the general philosophy behind longer factory warranties."



Photo courtesy Carecraft Industries Inc.

## "The chemical and protectants aftermarket can be one of the dealership's best profit centers."

### The Market's Future

The aftermarket's growth is fueled by several factors: More houses are being built without garages, meaning cars will spend more time outside; more cars are being built, increasing the potential aftermarket pool; and more dealers are participating in the market, as they search for additional profit centers.

"I forecast a real surge in the business," says Duraguard's Bob Shoenfeld.

Automotive International's David Besuden says that while he believes the market will continue to grow, it will soon reach a saturation point in parts of the country where the weather is either too mild to support the aftermarket or so severe that most dealers have already jumped into the business. The bulk of dealerships, however, lie between these two extremes.

The growth and profit potential of the aftermarket, however, may drastically change the nature of the suppliers. Already, says Siskin's Willard Nisson, the number of companies in the industry is being pared.

"There is a shakeout in the market right now," he says. "Those companies that remain will be the stronger, more customer-responsive, nationwide programs."

In this move toward national programs, however, two new players might move to the forefront: the chemical and protectants manufacturers and the automobile manufacturers.

"The marketing companies are being bought up by the base manufacturers," says John Vachon, vice president of Carecraft Industries Inc. in Jessup, MD, which was recently bought by its supplier, Munice Products. He points out that another marketing company, Rusty Jones, was recently purchased by Beatrice and asserts that the trend will only accelerate.

Some companies, though, such as

Siskin Enterprises, have pre-empted this trend, because they already produce their own chemical and protectant products.

Another potential entry, the domestic auto manufacturers, could set the aftermarket on end. By applying their tremendous resources to this marketplace, they would quickly become dominant players.

"The domestic manufacturers are realizing the profit potential of the chemical aftermarket," says Thermo-Guard's Rockwell. "They'll come in."

### How To Select A Supplier

An old joke in the real estate business runs that the three most important things about buying a house are "location, location and location." In selecting a supplier in the chemical and protectants aftermarket, the three most important factors may be "warranty, warranty and warranty."

"The dealer's biggest concern has to be the warranty," says Carecraft's John Vachon. "If he sells 150 cars a month with a 90-percent penetration, he's got a lot of potential obligations driving around if the warranty isn't any good."

A warranty's strength cannot necessarily be discerned on paper. The supplier may offer lifetime coverage on everything it supplies, but if it can't deliver, the warranty is worthless.

"The warranty is only as good as the company behind it," says Duraguard's Shoenfeld.

Dealers looking to enter the aftermarket or change suppliers should verify the solidity of the company. How long has it been in business? What is its reputation? What are other dealers' experiences with the company? Is its warranty program insured?

"Dealers have to be cautious," says Vachon. "First and foremost in their minds should be whether the company is going to be around in

five years."

Once they have verified the quality of the warranty, dealers should consider several other important factors in selecting a chemical and protectants supplier:

- Consider buying all chemicals and protectants from the same company. It cuts down on paperwork and warranty problems and improves customer satisfaction.

- Check on the ease of application of the product. Make sure the application equipment is not too large and unwieldy. Equipment should be easy to service. The product itself should not be too difficult, time-consuming or messy to apply.

- Make sure the company supplies training. Some application processes require comprehensive training. The company should also return to the dealership for supplemental training.

- Be certain the company offers adequate sales training. Selling the aftermarket differs from selling a car. The supplier needs to train and motivate salespeople to sell the products effectively. The company should also supply sales aids, such as posters and information brochures.

- Ensure the supplier has a quality product. Products differ. Some are definitely better than others and an inferior product will quickly result in a rash of customer complaints, warranty claims and dealer problems. Check with other dealers to find out their history with the product.

- Don't get hung up on price. Of course, cost is important but it must not be the only factor.

"The dealer has to look to the warranty," says Bob Shoenfeld. "Price is short-term thinking. Warranty is long-term and yields increased customer satisfaction and decreased dealer liability."

*Gerry Donohue is assistant editor of Automotive Executive magazine.*

## Warranty, Warranty, Warranty

**S**electing the right company is probably the most important thing you can do," says Russ Everett, vice president of Hollywood Chrysler/Plymouth in Hollywood, FL. "You need a company that has a strong warranty and that backs up that warranty."

As a Chrysler dealer, Everett benefits from the relationship between Chrysler and Automotive International. Chrysler markets Automotive International's Wax-

oyl products under the brand name Mastershield to Chrysler dealers. Everett says this arrangement gives him an extra degree of security.

"Everything is under warranty from beginning to end," he says. "If the factory warranty doesn't cover it, Mastershield does. We don't run into the problems of arguing who has responsibility."

Having that security and peace of mind were important to

Everett even before he joined the Mastershield program.

"We've always been with a major company," he says. "If we're going to sell and market the product, we want to represent a company that is going to be around in five years.

"We've never been hurt, but we know of dealers who sold a company's products and that company went out of business," he adds. "All they're left with are a lot of disgruntled customers."

## The Importance of Training

**W**e checked out several different companies," says Bob Rohrman, general manager of Bob Rohrman Auto Sales in Lafayette, IN. "We chose Thermo-Guard, because the products were the easiest to apply."

Rohrman says the problems involved in applying some products are almost not worth the money

to be made off of them.

"Thermo-Guard doesn't require a lot of hole drilling," he says. "Drilling holes can be a real problem if it's not done carefully."

To make certain the applications are done carefully and well, Rohrman ensures that all his technicians are completely

trained. He says Thermo-Guard comes to his dealership whenever he requests to train new employees or to supplement the training of long time employees. Good training and a good product, he says, have contributed to his low number of claims and correspondingly high customer satisfaction level.

## Product Quality Sells

**T**he product has to do the job," says Paul Lewis, general manager of Smythe Buick in San Jose, CA. "It doesn't do any of us any good if we're selling a poor product."

Lewis' chemicals and protectants supplier is Siskin Enterprises, and he asserts that the product is among the best on the market. He's been with Siskin for five years and has not had any

problems.

To reinforce that quality, Lewis sublets the application of the products to a specialist.

"He takes the cars when they arrive, works on them and has them back to the dealership within a couple of hours," Lewis says. "This works out better for us. He does a good, fast job, and there's no dealership exposure if the specialist makes a mistake."

A mistake, however, can lead to disgruntled customers and the loss of potential repeat business. So for Lewis—and every dealer—the final piece of the puzzle has to be the warranty.

"The main thing has to be the company standing behind the product," he says. "The supplier has to come through 100 percent on all warranty claims."

# These Dealers Put Their Trust In Thermo-Guard



"Thermo-Guard products have served us well over the years...their representative is always responsive to our needs. A good company to deal with."

H.J. Laney,  
General Manager  
Coral Volkswagen-Subaru  
West Palm Beach, FL



"I have been associated with Thermo-Guard since our opening in July 1983. It has been a pleasure dealing with their representative and the entire staff of Thermo-Guard."

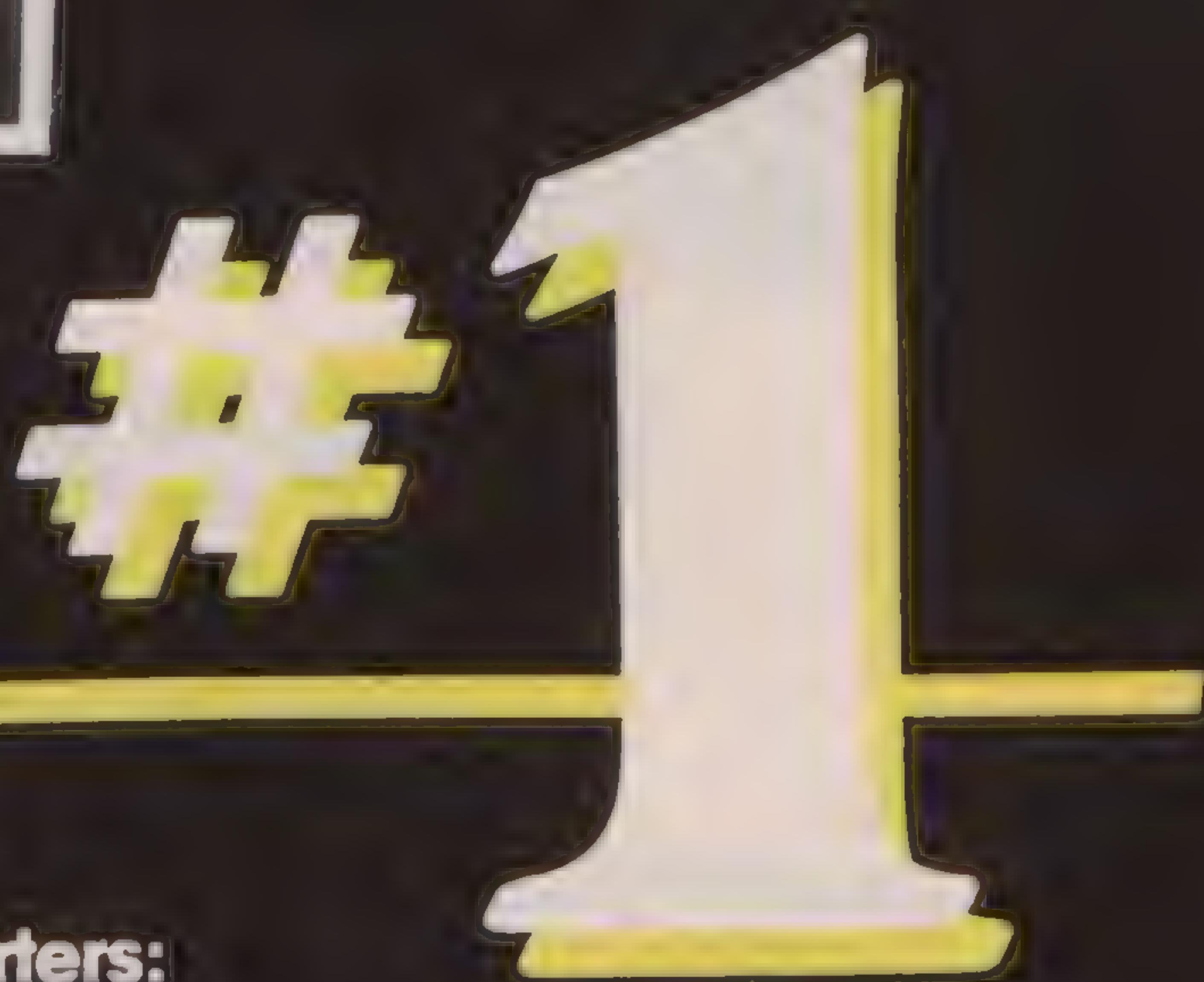
Robert A. Leo,  
General Sales Manager  
North Palm Beach Honda  
Lake Park, FL



"We have found that the Thermo-Guard process adds additional value to our cars and trucks and we are pleased to offer this additional protection to our customers."

Mark Packer,  
General Manager  
Al Packer Ford  
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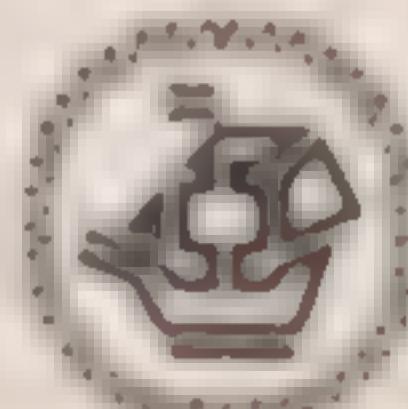
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ECP Incorporated, 1200 Jorie Blvd, Oak Brook, IL 60521

# CHEMICALS BUYER'S GUIDE

**Automotive International Inc.**  
11308 Tamarco Drive  
Cincinnati, OH 45242  
(513) 489-7883  
(800) 543-7156

*David W. Besuden, president  
Richard L. Hallberg Jr., vice president  
David L. Besuden, sales manager*

Automotive International has four divisions covering four areas: Waxoyl for rustproofing, Glaze Gard for paint sealant, Fab Gard for upholstery protection and Sound Gard for under-car protection. **Circle #40.**

**Barrier Industries Inc.**  
200 E. Main St.  
Port Jervis, NY 12771  
(914) 856-6623

*Harvey Wasserman, president  
Kurt J. Wasserman, CEO  
Ben Elder, national sales manager*  
Elk Grove Village, IL (312) 766-9332  
Jacksonville, FL (904) 354-2055  
Baton Rouge, LA (504) 769-0686

Basic manufacturer of Weather Barrier auto finish sealant, Soil Barrier, Stain Barrier, vinyl and fabric sealants, and Rust Barrier sealant. Barrier also manufactures automotive chemicals such as car wash, white wall tire cleaner, engine cleaners, glass cleaners and deodorants. **Circle #41.**

**BG Products Inc.**  
701 S. Wichita  
Wichita, KS 67213  
(316) 265-2686

*Don Walton, president*

BG Products manufactures and sells a line of greases, lubricants, fuel conditioners and chemical additives for automobiles, fleets, motorcycles and industrial uses. **Circle #42.**

**Carecraft Industries Inc.**  
2018 Lord Baltimore Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21207  
(301) 997-3300  
(800) 638-8674

*John K. Vachon, general manager*

Carecraft sells aftermarket auto products such as finish preservers, metal preservers, interior preservers and undercoating. **Circle #43.**

**Deep Seal International**  
2431 Monroe N.E.  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
(505) 294-1209  
(800) 545-6680

*E.W. Richardson, president  
B.L. Turner, vice president  
Charles Sprague, vice president/  
general manager  
Tom Cummings, vice president/  
regional manager*

Deep Seal offers a complete line of automobile protective chemicals, including rustproofing, paint sealant, fabric protector and sound seal, with special attention to dealership marketing. **Circle #44.**

**ECP Inc.-Auto Armor**  
1200 Jorie Blvd.  
Oak Brook, IL 60521  
(312) 986-2400  
(800) 323-3521

*M. Lawrence Garman, president  
Robert E. Meeks, vice president/  
marketing  
Ken L. Yaeger, vice president/sales  
Marty Sharp, vice president/  
administration*

Over 100 direct and distributor personnel across the United States

The Auto Armor Entire Car Protection product line includes a two-product rust protection system with lifetime, multiple repair, transferable warranty; a paint protection system with a DuPont Teflon® additive with a five-year transferable warranty, and fabric protection with fluorinated polymer coating with five-year transferable warranty. Fully insured warranty program. **Circle #6.**

**IAS Autec**  
P.O. Box 246  
Catawba, NC 28609  
(704) 478-2137  
(800) 438-3028  
(800) 222-6817 (NC)

*Tom Hobby, president*

Manufacturers of car care products: branded and dealer-labeled sealants (paints, fabric and vinyl), rustproofing and undercoating (flat spray and fogging systems). Support products include car wash cleaners and compounds. **Circle #46.**

**Monsey Products Co.**  
Cold Stream Road  
Kimberton, PA 19442  
(215) 933-8888  
(800) 523-0268

*Joseph T. Mooney Jr., president  
E. Thomas Beckett, general manager*

Base manufacturer of asphaltic cutbacks, undercoatings and rustproofings. Under the brand name Rust Miser, sells a complete warrantied line of chemical protectants, including paint sealants, rustproofings, undercoatings, fabric and vinyl products. **Circle #47.**

**Nationwide Ultra Seal Inc.**  
84 Sylvester St.  
Westbury, NY 11590  
(516) 997-5430  
(800) 645-3466

*Ted Greenseid, president  
George Caron, vice president  
Jerry Young, general manager  
Kevin Lang, regional sales manager  
Sharon Savoca, comptroller*

Ultra Seal of Texas, Houston, TX  
(713) 666-7115  
Ultra Services Inc., Rockville, MD  
(301) 231-7325

Ken Logman Assoc. Inc., Palisades, NJ  
(201) 947-4455  
Ultra Seal of South Florida, Hollywood,  
FL (305) 966-1616  
Gold Coast Ultra Seal Inc., Tampa, FL  
(813) 531-9082

The company's products include Ultra Seal Rust Preventative with Quiet Ride, Ultra Seal Paint Sealant with DuPont Teflon®, Ultra Seal Fabric Seal, Ultra Seal Vinyl Seal, Ultra Seal Leather Seal, Ultralock Anti-Theft System, Ultralock Perimeter Alarm Systems and 17 Ultra Seal chemical reconditioning systems. **Circle #48.**

**The Protector Corp.**  
740 N. Larch  
Elmhurst, IL 60126  
(312) 833-6877

*Jay Tuerk, president  
Edward Norris, vice president*

Products include rustproofing, paint sealant, fabric sealant, sound shield (undercoating), anti-theft systems, oil and gas additives. **Circle #49.**

## Chemicals Buyer's Guide

### Ridgeway Chemicals Inc.-'Tektor

651 Michael Wylie Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28210  
(704) 525-1000  
(800) 438-3399  
(800) 222-2171 (NC only)

*Joseph H. Gigler, president  
Doug Cecere, sales manager, automotive group*

Pittsburgh, PA (412) 963-7800  
Denver, CO (303) 361-6606

'Tektor Automotive Appearance Protection System includes paint sealants, fabric protection, undercoat, rustproofing systems and consumer products. Backshop products include stain removal kits, cosmoline solvent, silicone stripper, JB-80, all-purpose cleaner, window cleaners, car wash, vinyl and leather conditioner. Circle #50.

**Rusty Jones Inc.**  
6200 N. Hiawatha  
Chicago, IL 60646  
(312) 794-8500

*Michael Mater, president  
Mark Drinan, vice president/finance  
Robert Glover, vice president/sales*  
Auto appearance maintenance products and services. Extended mechanical service contracts. Circle #51.

**Safety-Kleen Corp.**  
777 Big Timber Rd.  
Elgin, IL 60120  
(312) 697-8460 (call collect in IL)  
(800) 323-5040

*Donald W. Brinckman, president and CEO  
David A. Dattilo, vice president/sales and service  
Robert W. Willmschen, vice president/finance  
Mike Carney, director of marketing*  
164 branches nationwide

Safety-Kleen Parts Cleaner Service includes machine, maintenance and provision of clean solvent. Customer Owned Machine Service provides clean solvent, plus machine cleaning. Immersion Cleaner Service provides an agitating machine and chlorinated solvent for cleaning heavily encrusted parts. Circle #52.

### Siskin Enterprises Inc./Perma Plate Products

185 S. State St.-Suite 930  
P.O. Box 58  
Salt Lake City, UT 84111  
(801) 359-9427  
(800) 453-8470

*Willard A. Nisson, president  
Don H. Miskin, marketing director  
Larry Hays, customer relations*

Manufacturer of the Perma-Plate automotive warrantied protection products, including paintguard exterior paint sealant, fiberguard interior fabric protector, rustguard rust inhibitor, soundguard sound deadener and undercoating, and leatherguard leather and vinyl protection. Circle #53.

**Thermo-Guard Inc.**  
3800 Inverrary Blvd.-Suite 209  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33319  
(305) 735-5120  
(800) 327-5120

*Lew Small, president  
Hap Hirsh, chairman of the board*  
Nationwide network of operations

Sells paint sealant (three- and five-year warranties available), rustproofing (warrantied for as long as you own your car), fabric/suede protector (three- and five-year warranties), vinyl/leather protector (three- and five-year warranties) and quiet ride (lifetime warranty). Circle #25.

**Trim-Line Inc.-3M**  
4394 Roseville Rd., P.O. Box 1136  
North Highlands, CA 95660  
(916) 481-5774  
(800) 824-5182

*Richard Smith, general manager  
Dick Glave, marketing/design manager*  
370 distributorships nationwide;  
2,200 applicators in the field

Applicators of paint protection polisher and sealant, Scotchguard carpet and upholstery protector, internal rust inhibitor, underbody rust inhibitor, car wash, acid rain treatment, black trim dressing and multi-surface protectant. The company has an international network of trained applicators and an extensive warranty program. Circle #55.

### Truco Inc.

4301 Train Ave.  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
(800) CAR-GLOW

*R.P. Hoskins, president*

Complete line of automotive chemicals manufactured under Truco or private label. Circle #56.

### TST-Total Systems Technology Inc.

65 Terence Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15236  
(800) 245-4828  
(800) 472 2775 (PA only)

*Charles Piscatelli, president  
Leonard Felman, vice president*

12 field locations across the United States

Paint contamination systems, preventive and corrective; paint protection, including acid-resistant wax, fabric protection, rust inhibitor systems, detail chemicals with trouble-shooting guides, acid and fallout spot remover kits, films and tapes. Circle #57.

**Tuff-Kote Dinol**  
25200 Malvina  
Warren, MI 48090  
(313) 776-3040

*Tom M. Mack, president  
Deane Presar, vice president, sales and marketing*

7 field locations across the United States

Automotive rustproofing and accessory sales, including fabric protection, paint glaze, pickup truck bedliners and sound deadener. Circle #58.

**Ultra-Seal/Circle Marketing**  
7 W. Belcher  
Foxboro, MA 02035  
(617) 543-9222

*Timothy A. Fraumann*

Ultra-Shield offers Rust-Guard, with lifetime insured warranty; Sound-Guard, with lifetime insured warranty; Interior-Guard, with lifetime insured warranty; Paint-Guard, with five-year insured warranty; reconditioning chemicals, and service contracts and financial services. Circle #59.

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# THE ISLAND DEALER

**Selling Fords on  
Nantucket provides  
more than its share of  
challenges.**

By Gerry Donohue

**B**ill Tornovish's inventory arrives one car at a time—by boat. From Hyannis or Woods Hole, the cars come on the ferry, crossing the 30 miles of Atlantic Ocean that separate the island of Nantucket, MA from the rest of the United States.

"For years I paid the freight from the mainland," says Tornovish, general manager and part owner of Don Allen Auto Service Inc. "Then, last year, Ford decided that they should pay for bringing the cars to the island, so I sent them a bill for more than \$15,000 in back freight. I should have had it all along.

"I always absorbed that cost, because to be competitive, I couldn't charge customers boat freight."

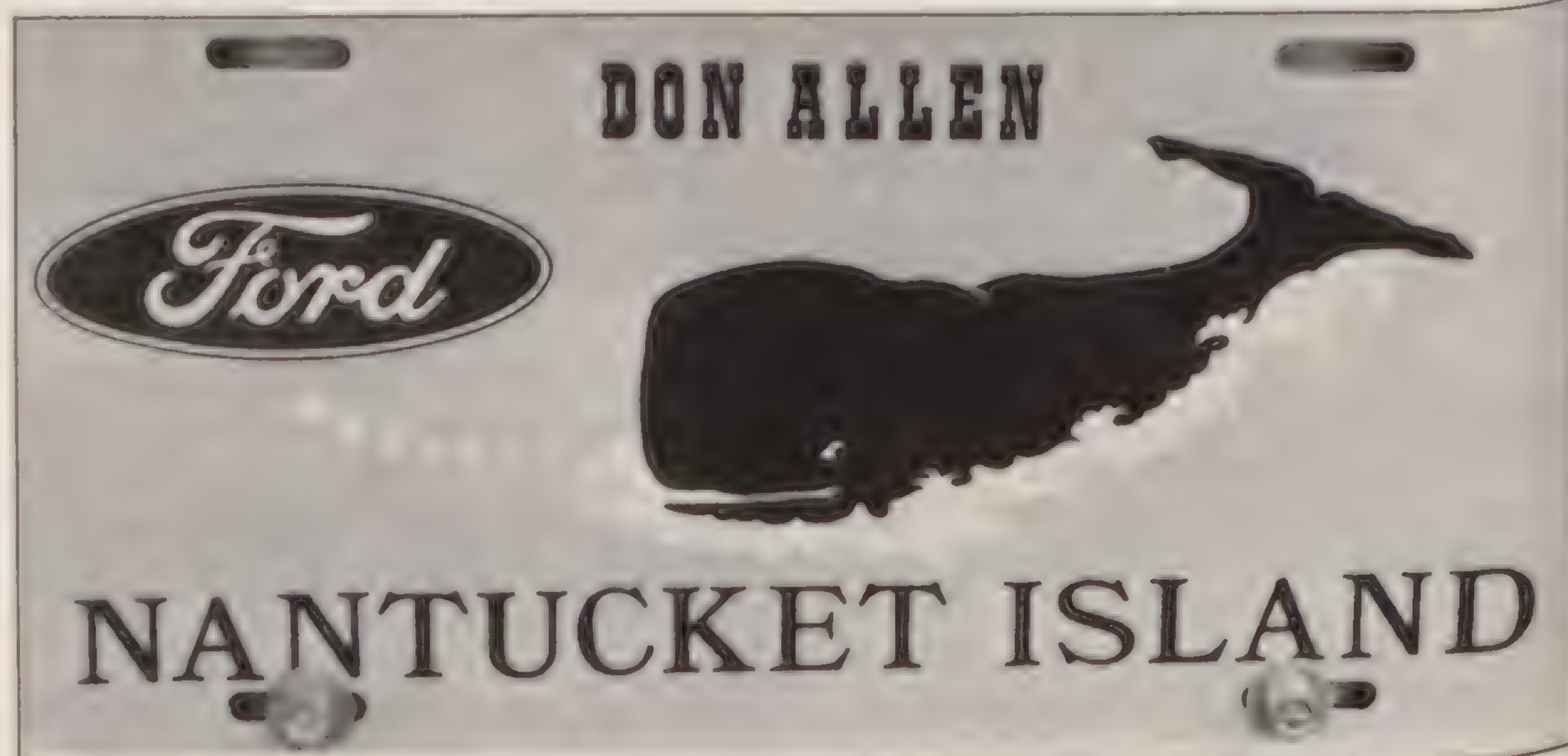
Incidental expenses can quickly turn a dealer's bottom line from black to red. In the competitive world of automobile retail, a single extra charge can send customers scurrying down the street to the next dealer. While Tornovish faces numerous incidental expenses in operating his Ford/Mercury dealership, he enjoys the benefit of having most of his competition more than 30, very wet, miles away.

#### From Whales to Tourists

Nantucket is a 47-square-mile island whose pork-chop shape has made it a safe harbor for ships for 300 years. During the 18th and 19th centuries, it was the center of the prosperous whaling industry and the home port of the Pequod,



Bill Tornovish's desk is the showroom at Don Allen's; popular demand is high for a Don Allen license plate.



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To order call or write: The Resource Link, 2906 East Ponce De Leon, Decatur, GA 30030; 800/241-7785;  
In Georgia 404/299-3627.

Circle #15 on Reader Service Card

**"Every business on this island is the same. You have five summer months to make it, so you really have to hustle."**

the ill-fated vessel of Captain Ahab in Herman Melville's classic "Moby Dick." When the whaling industry receded, Nantucket settled into a sleepy, isolated fishing village, only to resurge a few decades ago when New England's wealthy discovered it as the perfect summer resort. Today, Nantucket enjoys a booming resort economy and one of the highest per capita incomes in Massachusetts.

"We have anywhere from 6,000



Taking time from his "good job in a great place," Tornovish talks to scallopers; walks the beach.

to 7,000 year-round residents," says Tornovish, "but our summer population probably reaches 60,000. With the traffic and cars, it seems like New York City."

The town of Nantucket is anything but New York City. Norman Rockwell's idea of a small town, Nantucket contains centuries-old houses shaded by ancient oaks siding cobblestone streets barely wide enough for a full-size car. Better suited for a horse and buggy than a Ford, the town has an undeniable charm that draws more visitors every year.

And those visitors are staying. Summer homes are going up at a phenomenal pace. Nantucket land values have soared, with the average house selling for close to \$200,000.

"There are serious bucks here," Tornovish says. "This is becoming more and more a resort for the wealthy. Recessions don't happen here. We just wait for the summer and the big bucks return."

"A lot of well-to-do people own homes here and they're going to stay no matter what—spending money."

Obviously, all this wealth, even if only for the summer, benefits Tornovish's business.

#### **From Escorts to Porsches**

"Every business on this island is the same," Tornovish says. "You have five summer months to make it, so

you really have to hustle. Our service department runs non-stop from May to September."

For an island with a summer population of 60,000, Nantucket has very few auto service stores. Besides Tornovish, there is one other dealership, Albert L. Silva Inc., and a couple of gas stations. There is only one independent parts store.

"During the summer, we're less a dealer than a general repair shop," Tornovish says. "We work on everything that comes through the door—from Escorts to Porsches. Once in a while we have to draw the line, but our people can work on almost anything."

"Through September of last year, we did about \$150,000 in service, but the bulk of that took place after May," Tornovish says. "And we have the only spray paint booth and front-end machine on the island, so we get all that business."

Tornovish says his labor rate has to be about \$5 per hour higher than on the mainland, but that is only to cover his unique overhead. Because heating fuel has to be shipped in, it is very expensive, and the island's electric company charges "Nantucket rates." And then there's parts.

"Everything has to be flown in," Tornovish says. "It's a real problem. We have to order from dealers on the mainland. There's a little extra charge, but that's the price you pay for living on an island."



"We get Ford parts pretty rapidly. Most domestic makes also come quickly. We do, however, have a problem with foreign cars."

To keep ordering to a minimum, Tornovish maintains a large parts inventory.

"I stock about \$70,000 worth of parts. I hate to put all that money on the shelves, but it has to be there. We can't run down the street to another dealer to pick up something."

#### From Ferry to Customer

While Tornovish maintains a large parts inventory, his new-car inventory is relatively small.

"It's difficult keeping a full line of everything Ford and Mercury offer," he says. "I do a lot of 4x4 Broncos, F-150 Rangers and Bronco 2s, and I try to keep a good mix of Escorts, Lynxes, Mustangs, LTDs and Mercury Marquis. But I don't do too much in full-size cars; they're too big for the island. And if people want this type of car they'll usually order it anyway. In fact, about half of my sales are retail orders."

When delivered from the factory, Tornovish's cars are loaded individually onto the Nantucket ferry. When the ferry arrives at the island they are off-loaded and left in the parking lot. Either Tornovish or one of his employees then drives them to the store. It's a roundabout system, but it works. Especially now that the dealership has a computer link with Ford.

"It used to take three or four days for an order just to get from here to Boston by mail," Tornovish says. "It's nice to be on-line. It keeps us more in touch with the outside world."

While being a dealer on an island obviously has some drawbacks, Tornovish enjoys as well-defined a market as any dealer in the country. Year in, year out, he sells about 180 new vehicles a year, two-thirds pickups and 4x4s.

## The Local Recovery

The weather and demanding consumers put a lot of pressure on New England dealers, but thanks to a booming economic resurgence, dealers in the Northeast are doing better than ever.

"In the mid to late '70s, the migration to the Sun Belt drove down sales and forced some dealers out of business," says William Cammarano, NADA's Massachusetts director and former regional vice president. "It's turned around now. An influx of high-technology companies has made this region among the fastest growing in the country."

The strong business climate, coupled with unemployment below 4 percent and a favorable tax environment, has been especially beneficial for dealers in the Boston area.

"All the dealers are doing well," Cammarano says.

A Ford dealer, Cammarano says that New England is among the best-selling Ford regions in

"Ninety-five percent of our customers are local people. They come in, say 'I want a car', pick one out and give me a check. These are repeat customers who buy a vehicle every three years. We service it, we take care of it and we know who's going to buy the trade-in. It's pretty nice that way."

"It's not like having to support five or six salespeople and large numbers each month. There are no



the country—the best in Escort sales.

"We were at the bottom of the ladder year after year," he says. "Now we're at the top or darn close to it."

For all this good fortune, Cammarano says New England dealers do face some regional obstacles.

"The weather's tough up here; it can hurt you," he says. "It makes us a bit of a cyclical industry, but in recent years business has been good almost year-round."

A second obstacle is "consumerism." Cammarano says New England dealers have to be more responsive to consumer demands. The new breed of consumers spawned by the high technology industries is demanding both of the product and the dealer.

"You have to respond," Cammarano says.

—Gerry Donohue

hustles or cutthroat sales. Instead, we up the grosses to make up a little for our unique situation.

"But we do have to stay competitive with the mainland. We're not so isolated that people won't hop the ferry for a better deal. We can't overcharge people. They'll see it and they'll feel it. They don't like to hassle, but they want our best deal. And I do business with them, too. So, if I stick it to them, they

**"All our parts have to be flown in. It costs extra, but that's the price you pay for living here."**

stick me back. It's a captive relationship."

#### **From Junkyard to Frontyard**

Used cars are a problem. Nantucket cars don't put on much mileage—the island is small and almost everyone has at least two cars—but they get hit hard by the weather. The wet, salty air corrodes the body, and cars often wear away before they wear out.

"It's also tough because you can't get rid of junk cars," Tornovish says. "With the price of steel down, it hasn't been cost-effective to truck the cars off the island. We've had to stockpile them until the price goes back up. Two car crushers recently came onto the island, but we've got a pretty big junkyard in back."

The junkyard is big, but not noticeable. In fact, the entire dealership isn't really noticeable. It's easy to drive past the one-story building, set back from the road, just outside of town. Although there are numerous cars in the sandy "front yard" and a few new ones conspicuously displayed on a grass knoll at the road's edge, there are no big Ford dealership signs. Anywhere.

"Ford wanted me to put up their signs, but when I took the plans to the island's Board of Selectmen, they turned me down," Tornovish says. "We don't have a lighted sign or a stoplight on the island and the board wanted to keep it that way. Anyway, I don't really need signs. The island's just too small."

And so is the dealership. The whole building would probably fit in a metropolitan dealership showroom. For that matter, Don Allen Auto Service has no showroom. Just Tornovish's office, the customer service area, parts counter, service department and body shop.

The prototypical small-town dealership. And Tornovish is the prototypical small-town dealer.

That's not to say, however, that he didn't make a play for the big time.

"I tried everything when I first started here," he says. "Staying open nights and weekends, heavy advertising, but it didn't increase anything. I sell the same amount of cars if I work 40 hours as if I work 70 hours. So we've decided to keep everything down—payroll, expenses and overhead—and operate five days a week.

"I don't even take part in the big mainland sales, like Washington's Birthday sales, because chances are people would come back the next day and buy anyway. It's not high-pressure sales here. People call me at home and ask me to stay open late the next night so they can come by and look at our cars."

#### **From Gas Station to Dealership**

Tornovish will be there. To sell the car. To help with financing. To handle any problems that arise. He is the general manager, service manager, business manager and sales staff. He is also a one-third owner of the dealership.

"It's a three-way deal with my two brothers-in-law, Bob and Don Allen, who work as mechanics in the service department," Tornovish says. "It's a family business. We'll never make a tremendous amount of money, but we do well."

The three started out as owners of a service station, body shop and general repair store on Nantucket. In 1968, the island's Ford dealer decided to retire his franchise. Ford, however, asked him to look for a buyer and Tornovish and the Allens stepped forward.

"Apparently there were some people at Ford who didn't want to see this facility close. I guess they wanted to keep it open for service and whatever sales are here."

Tornovish says Ford understands his situation and he has had a quiet, successful relationship with the factory.

"I think we have fewer customer service complaints because we know everybody and we try to resolve a problem before it reaches the district level. So Ford doesn't hear from us much. And a lot of my sales and service reps don't like to fly in small planes so I don't see them very often. Sometimes, except for sales reports, Ford doesn't hear from me for months."

Tornovish says this situation will probably continue. He doesn't foresee any dramatic changes in his market.

"Growth is very slow. You can only sell so many cars here. And while summers are great, during the winter you could almost shut the place down."

"Sometimes you can sit here for four or five days without selling a new or used car. There've been times when we worked four day weeks just to keep everyone employed. It seems like I could take January and February off and go south."

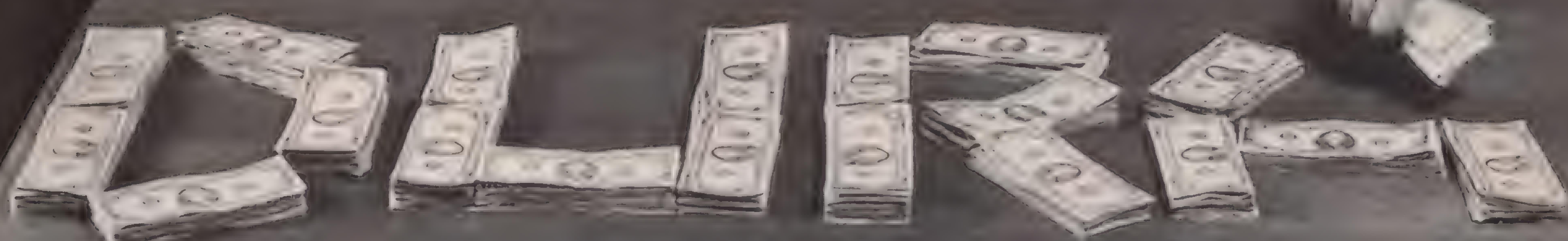
During the quiet winter months, Tornovish says life on Nantucket quickly becomes monotonous. With the cold, wet wind sweeping over the small island and the lack of excitement, he says the islanders have to get away, even if it's just for a weekend.

"I've lived on islands since I was 17," says Tornovish, who first came to Nantucket during a stint in the Navy. "I've been here for 25 years now, but winter still takes some getting used to."

Will he ever leave?

"It's not a real prestigious thing to be a dealer on Nantucket, but I enjoy the business," he says. "I don't take it too seriously. I know I'm not going to be rich, but I've got a good job in a great place. There are a lot of people who would be very willing to trade places with me."

*Gerry Donohue is assistant editor of Automotive Executive.*



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## Issues Status Report

**N**ADA's legislative watchdogs hit the ground running as the 99th Congress reconvened in January. The following is a capsule summary of major legislative issues that will keep NADA busy in 1986.

### Fleet Subsidies

After unsuccessful negotiations last year with Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), the powerful chairman of the House Commerce Committee, to resolve this continuing problem for the franchise system, NADA introduced bills in both the House (H.R. 3739) and Senate (S. 1849). The next step is to hold hearings on the bill and NADA is pushing for that at the earliest possible date. However, Rep. Dingell has sworn to fight any effort to end the

fleet program entirely, and NADA expects tough sledding on these bills.

### Gray Market

"Free enterprise" forces in Congress have been vocal in opposing any attempts to kill the gray market outright, and there is general agreement that adequate support for such a measure does not exist in either the House or Senate. The new strategy is to structure technical requirements that force gray market importers to comply with U.S. standards and bear a number of costs they have so far avoided. New bills are being drafted in both houses and will likely be attached to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration authorization bill.

The Environmental Protection

Agency is expected to issue new regulations in the near future calling for similar requirements for direct importers, who are already reeling under the effect of new NHTSA anti-theft requirements for Vehicle Identification Number marking of certain vehicle parts, a sharp rise in the value of the deutsche mark, and tougher pricing and warranty actions by European manufacturers. Nevertheless, NADA will continue to push for a total ban on gray market vehicle imports.

### Odometers

It's particularly frustrating when you have a bill everyone supports that won't pass. NADA was successful in getting passage of an odometer bill by the Senate in December. But the

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House chose to combine the odometer proposal with other, more controversial issues, in a larger omnibus bill, where it now languishes. NADA has entered into discussions with principal sponsors and Chairman Dingell about the prospects of breaking the odometer provisions out of the omnibus bill and passing a separate House odometer bill. We are very optimistic that this will happen and the bill will be passed this session.

#### Tax Reform

This one is a biggy, of course, and much time will be taken up this year—as it was last year—with keeping the hammer of tax reform off the franchised dealer. Thanks to an effective lobbying effort by NADA staff and members, we were able to protect the deductibility of interest on consumer loans in the tax reform bill passed by the House in December. NADA was also successful in getting the House Ways and Means Committee to lower maximum tax rates for individuals and businesses, though we were not pleased with the bill's repeal of investment tax credits or lengthened depreciation periods. Efforts will now focus on the Senate, which will hold a series of hearings on the House proposals before marking up of its own bill.

#### Superfund

Both the House and Senate have passed legislation significantly expanding the "Superfund" hazardous waste cleanup program and must now reconcile their bills in this session. That may be a lengthy exercise due to major differences in the bills, primarily over how the program will be funded. The House wants oil and chemical companies to pick up most of the tab, while the Senate favors a broad-based excise tax to be paid by producers of raw and manufactured goods and by the importers of such goods. Many members view this new excise tax as a type of value-added tax that could be construed as a trade barrier.

NADA will watch these bills closely and will continue to oppose funding that imposes a tax that bears no relationship to the amount

of waste generated or that would otherwise prove harmful to franchised dealers.

—Ted Orme

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## CALENDAR



### March

**5 to 8.** National Truck Equipment Convention and Exposition, Hilton, New Orleans, LA

**6 to 16.** Motor Show, Geneva, Switzerland

**21 to 22.** Northeast Autobody Congress and Trade Show, Meadowlands Hilton, Secaucus, NJ

**24 to 27.** 35th Annual Motor Vehicle Maintenance Conference, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

### April

**4 to 6.** The Greater New York Truck Show, Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Long Island, NY

**5 to 6.** Import Automotive Parts and Accessories Trade Show, sponsored by Auto Internacional Association, New York Hilton, NY

**6 to 9.** Automotive Market Research Council Spring Conference, South Sea Plantation, Captiva Island, FL

**12 to 15.** 23rd Annual American Truck Dealers Convention and Exposition, Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, CA

**17 to 19.** Congress of Automotive Repair and Service (CARS), co-sponsored by Automotive Service Councils Inc. and the Independent Automotive Service Association, Dearborn Hyatt Regency, Detroit, MI

**17 to 23.** Truck Trailer Manufacturers Association, Boca Raton Hotel and Club, Boca Raton, FL

**20 to 22.** 53rd Annual Convention of the Automobile Dealers Association of North Dakota, Sheraton Riverside Inn, Minot, ND

**28 to 30.** Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association EDP Spring Conference, Marriott Long Wharf, Boston, MA

### May

**2 to 4.** 26th Annual Convention, Vehicle Maintenance Conference,

University of Washington, Seattle, WA

**4 to 7.** Automotive Advertisers Council Meeting, Sea Pines Plantation, Hilton Head, SC

**20 to 22.** 14th Annual New England Truck Show, Bayside Expo Center, Boston, MA

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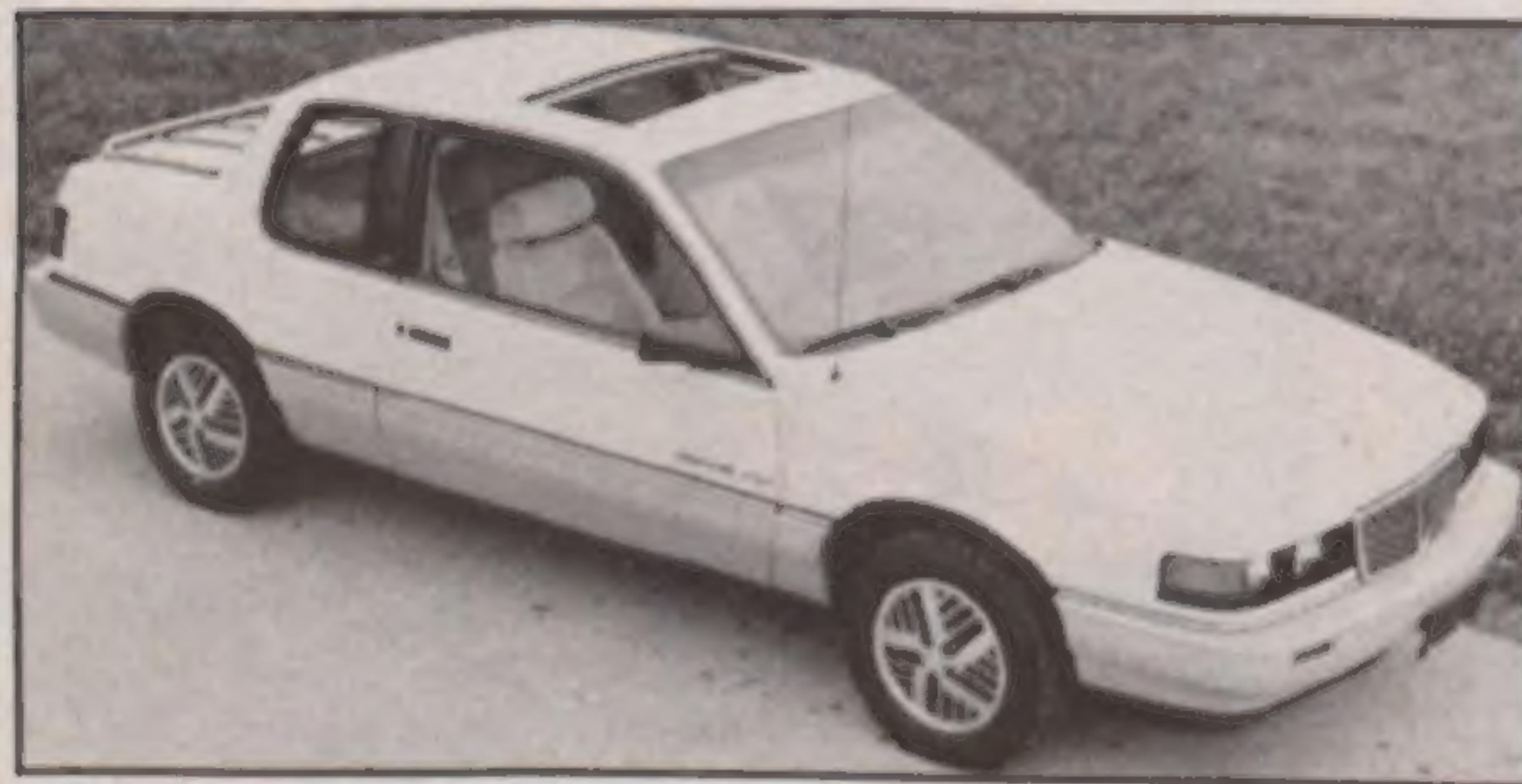
## SHOWCASE



### POWER MOONROOF

Sky-Top Sunroofs is offering a power moonroof to fit the Pontiac Grand Am, Oldsmobile Calais and Buick Somerset Regal. The electrically operated, glass panel sliding moonroof has a wide opening with an unobstructed view and more headroom than most power moonroofs, according to the manufacturer. Other features include a stainless steel glass frame and matching trim ring, or optional charcoal trim, a privacy sunshade, luxurious interior finish and automatic wind deflector.

**Circle #20 on Reader Service Card**



### JAGUAR SUNROOF

Electric sunroofs are now available as options on the Jaguar XJ-S coupe through Hess & Eisenhardt. The sunroof, the Jaguar XJ-S' first dealer-offered option, has a fully retracting glass roof panel, an integral wind deflector, and a sliding sun shade, and also can be opened only at the rear for improved air circulation.

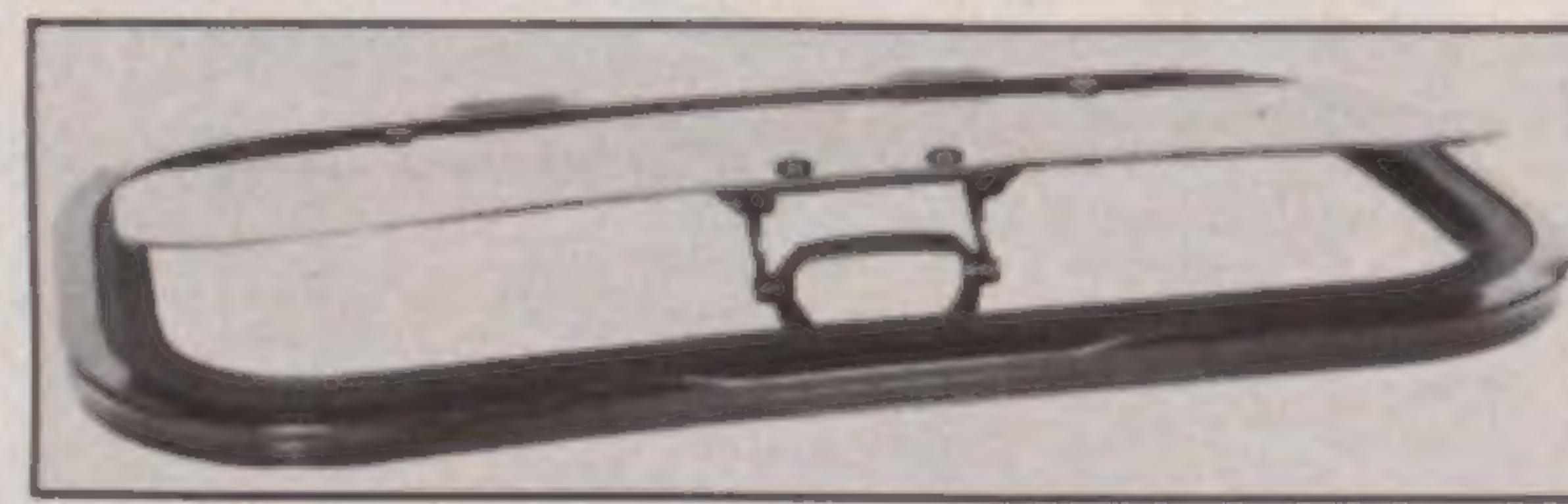
**Circle #73 on Reader Service Card**



### CHEROKEE SUNROOF

Stretch Forming Corp.'s Auto Port sunroof, for the 1984-86 Jeep Cherokee, features special joggled frame work that matches the vehicle's raised rib top for a tighter leak-free fit and low-profile installation, says the manufacturer.

**Circle #75 on Reader Service Card**



### GRAND AM SUNROOF

Cars & Concepts Inc. now has a Skylite electric sunroof for the Pontiac Grand Am. This lightweight Skylite features smooth, quiet operation and allows the sunroof panel to stop automatically at any desired position—open, closed or vented—at the touch of a button. The Skylite's solar-tinted glass panel retracts fully into the roof assembly and has a built-in wind deflector for clean aerodynamic performance and profile. A watertight seal is ensured by a water management system that channels water off the roof via concealed drain tubes.

**Circle #3 on Reader Service Card**



*Information and photographs of products listed in Showcase have been provided by manufacturers' press releases. A product's appearance in this column in no way implies an endorsement by either NADA, the NADA Services Corp. or Automotive Executive.*

### SLIDING SUNROOF

Skyroof, the sliding sunroof from Donmar, has all-aluminum one-piece construction, low-profile tracks and a dual seal system, ensuring leak-proof performance. Its tempered glass panel is mirrored and smoked, and is available with a ceramic screening to eliminate further heat and glare. The panel slides open with easy one-hand operation, according to the manufacturer.

**Circle #71 on Reader Service Card**

### FIRE EXTINGUISHER

Flam-X, a double-jet aerosol fire extinguisher for car and truck use, helps stop minor fires before they evolve into major catastrophes, according to its manufacturer, Flam-X USA. The portable 6-by-3-inch plastic extinguisher, weighing less than a pound, fits neatly under the dashboard or seat, or in the glove compartment. The plastic unit contains Halon 1301/1211, a clear mixture of gas and liquid that cools and snuffs out fires, and interferes with combustion in liquid fuel or electrical fires. Halon evaporates quickly and does not damage sensitive engine components nor leave a messy residue. Flam-X has a 10-year lifespan.

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